STORIES IN SCHOOL

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A BOOK FOR THOSE WHO USE "THE SOWER" SCHEME OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION ON STORY-TELLING

BY

THE EDITOR OF "THE SOWER"

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NIHIL OBSTAT:

FR. INNOCENTIUS APAP, O.P.,
Censor Deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR:

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vicarius Generalis.

WESTMONASTERII,
die 29 Januarii, 1923.

First printed - 1923
Second impression 1927

Made and Printed in Great Britain

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STORIES IN SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

STORY-TELLING is the oldest of all the arts; the only art that is consecrated by the practice of our Divine Lord; an art so primitive and fresh and universal that everybody can attempt it and nobody can reduce it to rules. Indeed, it cannot be done by rules, for it is a natural gift, like conversation; but it is a natural gift of which most people have some share, as they will discover when they try to use it. Most of us in these days never do try seriously, never give our attention to it as a thing worth doing well. The present writer has to confess, not without shame and confusion of face, that he has never made any persistent effort to tell stories adequately, to children or anyone else; but as this book must have an Introduction and nobody else can be prevailed upon to write it, the present writer here sets forth what he has gathered partly from his own observation, but chiefly from the experience of others who really know and practise. He can guarantee the soundness of what he is going to say, though he cannot claim the credit of discovering it for himself.

The Aim of Story-Telling.

It must be repeated, then, that story-telling is purely and simply an *art,* the interest and pleasure it affords to the listeners being its end and object, and the story-teller's reward. For a story-teller this must be the essential attitude. Be an *artist;* make vivid word-pictures; awaken eager interest, breathless attention, the light of vision in all the young eyes fixed with so self-forgetting a gaze on your face. Enjoy the telling, as all artists enjoy their work. Feel rewarded when you have satisfied the story-appetite of a crowd of children and the end of your story is greeted

with a murmur of approval and the plea for "another story."

Only by adopting this artist-attitude can you ever become a good story-teller. But of course, *incidentally,* your story may have many other uses besides artistic enjoyment. It may serve to set up a mental contact or sympathy between you and your audience, for nothing can unfreeze people as quickly as a story. Or it may have been very instructive to them, because nearly all wisdom and knowledge can be imparted by way of stories, with a little ingenuity. Or it may have inspired them with an ideal which they had not possessed before. Or it may have been what all real stories are—a piece of mental (imaginative) *experience* to your hearers; and all experience is educative and character-forming—in fact, the only real education is experience of one sort or another.

So the first point to remember about story-telling is that it is an art, and to do it successfully you must do it in the spirit of an artist. And secondly, that if you have to impart knowledge or inspiration by means of your story, you must arrange all that beforehand, weaving it into the story as you think it out, so that it comes out naturally—an integral part of the story—as you tell it, without your having to fall into the didactic manner or insert instructive or moralising parentheses.

The Art of the Story-Teller.

It *is* an art, since it can only be done in the spirit of the artist; but also it is the most informal and unstudied of all arts. Perhaps no art is so completely independent and unconscious of its material, so completely absorbed in its idea. A story-teller seems to give no reflective thought whatever to his language, to the words he uses, nor to his voice. His one thought is to tell a certain happening in its every detail, in its proper dramatic sequence, with its pathetic or amusing value, in such a way as to bring it home to his hearers as actual, interesting, worth hearing. The story may be sober history, or it may be one of Grimm's most unlikely fairy-tales—no matter; for the

moment it must be actual and real to both teller and hearers. It is the story that matters; on the incidents of the story the story-teller must keep his eye fixed as the golfer's eye is fixed on the ball he is driving. And therefore, without conscious effort, he chooses the simplest, most persuasive language; that best fitted to his particular hearers; instinctively avoiding all words which they would not understand and which would distract their attention from the things he is narrating. During the greater part of the narrative his voice will be simple, quiet, unobtrusive. Unconsciously to himself (almost or quite) it will become more impressive, perhaps lowered to a whisper, or raised a little, at the more dramatic, pathetic, or telling parts of the story. Neither teller nor hearers will notice this in itself—it is just a natural quality of human speech when one person tries to make intelligible and vivid to others some experience real or imagined of his own. That, in short, *is* story-telling—transferring, from your own mind to the minds of an interested circle of listeners, a series of happenings that for the moment are to be regarded as actual. Anything less convincing than that falls below the art of story-telling and becomes mere instruction.

The Main Hindrance.

The chief thing, therefore, that hinders you and me and other persons from telling stories properly is self-consciousness. To make the people in your story live, to carry along your hearers, it is necessary that you should have forgotten yourself. In practice this is apparently not very difficult. Once you have got absorbed in the interest of the story itself and are conscious of a set of eager minds hanging on your words, self falls into oblivion. Clearly the great thing is to have faith. Have faith in your story, that it is worth hearing in every detail. Have faith in the fact that everybody, especially children, love nothing so much as listening to a story. Have faith that since the story is worth hearing, and the children are keen to hear it, you *can* transfer it from your mind to theirs, however unskilled in eloquence you may be. Then start telling—and there you are!

Arrange your Material Beforehand.

To come down to details, there are, of course, one or two practical essentials that may almost be called rules. But here I can quote one of my authorities. "One essential is that you must know the story well, so that you can go right ahead with the telling, without any search of your memory; and that you have the story clearly in your head in the *form* in which you mean to tell it; that is, having schemed out beforehand the exact sequence in which you will make the events lead on from each other; the various scenes or people which you will specially describe in detail; the characteristics which you mean to bring out in your characters; the points which you mean to work up into more or less dramatic climaxes; and especially the real climax, and the definite finale. The more experienced story-teller may sometimes arrange his material as he goes along, but the novice cannot possibly; and even the experienced story-teller does not if he can help it."

Visualise in Scenes.

"Another essential is visualisation. You must see the scene you are describing if you want to make others see it. In fact, by far the best way to tell stories is to divide up the whole story into scenes, describing each and what takes place,—yourself watching and describing the little drama developing on the stage of your mind. There will sometimes have to be a certain amount of linking-up narrative between scene and scene; but that should be as brief and to the point as possible, leading up to the next scene, with its vivid brief descriptions, its dramatic happenings, its own little climax (however slight), and its rounded finish. There is nothing children dislike so much as *vagueness* in story-telling; or a long-winded narration of *facts* apart from actual description of scene and action."

What your Stories Do.

In story-telling it is within your power to introduce the children to a host of people, both real and imaginary. If you have a good grasp of the characters of the people and

can get them grasped by your hearers, you may be doing a greater thing than you know. After all, other human beings (from Christ our Lord downwards) have a far more vital effect on our lives than anything else. This holds true both naturally and supernaturally, and whether for good or for ill. All virtues and vices, all noble qualities and petty traits, tend to become incarnate to the imagination; one might almost say that until they do they have little significance for us Probably in the nursery rhymes and English fairy-tales we found our first conceptions of the ordinary workaday qualities, good and bad, incarnated in that quaint throng of very real and yet so entirely imaginary personages. But there soon comes a time when something more adequate is needed to initiate the child into the infinite possibilities which life holds of being and doing; and stories about people, who were such and such, and who did this, that and the other, have always been man's chief way of educating his children in the art of living. It was forgotten a little, as so many other bedrock things of human nature were forgotten, in that strange nineteenth century, but we can see now that we must get back to it. Children must not be starved of their stories, and stories must be about people. What is required is that the people should be truly drawn, have genuine human nature and behave in a way true to type; that the good people should be good in such a way as really and truly to recommend goodness, and the bad people make bad things seem thoroughly detestable.

Stories of Sanctifying Grace.

It follows from all this that for Catholic children a literally essential part of education is a living and loving familiarity with the stories of the Saints. Such a familiarity is important from two points of view—the spiritual and the historical. If the children are to grow up holy they must needs hold incarnate sanctity in admiration. The Saints provide standing examples of the spirit of Christ in all imaginable circumstances, and dominating every conceivable kind of temperament—Christ incarnate on a much

more universal scale than His Palestine life allowed of; which is a real theological fact stated over and over again by St. Paul, in one way or another, and by all the deeper spiritual writers from St. Paul onwards. That the hagiographers have done everything that is possible to make the Saints seem unreal and often objectionable people, and to give the impression that they were a race of professional Saints or somehow supermen, necessarily quite different from all the rest of us, is one of the tragedies of Catholic education. Still, a few of our writers have already begun showing the Saints as they really were, as far as poor human language can do it. But this has not yet been done much for children; and, besides, the written word is never so powerful as the spoken word. So it is the task of the teacher and of the Catholic father and mother to make the incidents of the Saints' lives (however artificially or crudely they may be recounted by the hagiographers) a real part of their own minds, and then—with all simplicity, with the best art they know, with humour certainly, and sympathy—introduce the Saints and the children to each other. As to the results, the Holy Ghost will see to that. Then as to the historical aspect—well, it was really the Saints who *made* Church history, much more indeed than the Luthers and Tetzels, the Constantines and Richelieus. Long before the children have arrived at the age for learning systematic Church history, or even for knowing about the Saints in their proper historical sequence, they should make the acquaintance of individual Saints all up and down the centuries. These will then stand for familiar landmarks when the time arrives to explore the mighty subject of the Church's life in the world.

A Word as to this Book.

The "*Sower* Scheme", now being used in more and more schools (both elementary and other) makes a rather exigent demand on the teacher in regard to story-telling, especially in the "middle period". Teachers, who are able and willing to tell stories, may find that the search for the stories they want to tell takes more time than they

can well give, and requires access to books that are not always at hand. The aim of the present little volume, then, is to give the outline of all the stories suggested in the middle period of the Scheme (and perhaps a few others as well, for there is naturally nothing hard and fast in this part of the work—the stories mentioned in the Scheme are only a suggested selection). What is given in this book is simply the outline, the bare facts told as briefly as possible *for the teacher,* without any regard to the kind of language suitable to children, or to dramatic effect and so on. It is simply a book of *material,* and it is left to the teacher—once in possession of the facts—to fill in the imaginative detail, the local colour, the personality of the men and women, the supernatural spirit of the story.

The stories from Old and New Testament are given only in descriptive titles (the idea of which is to refresh the teacher's memory at a glance when necessary) with their Scripture references, and are divided into what should be a suitable-length story for one telling. This method of "references only" has been adopted because it is not possible to equal the language of Holy Scripture itself for narrative value, and the teacher will best be able to reproduce the spirit of each story by reading it up for himself in the original. (The same with regard to the references to the *Little Flowers of St. Francis;* only in that gem of mediaeval literature is the freshness and naïveté of the primitive Franciscan spirit to be found.)—It is necessary to make one remark which applies to many stories from the Old Testament. Our Catholic authorities tell us (what indeed we should naturally expect) that the inspired writers sometimes made use of pre-existing material, written or oral, and even collected it for preservation without committing themselves to its historical accuracy; and that such material is often what in other literature we should call "legendary". So when children ask about such stories (as they certainly will), "Did it really happen?" the Catholic teacher should not answer yes or no unless he feels sure of his scholarship and his theology. As a rule it is much better to answer frankly, "We don't always

know. Only the Church can tell us for certain, and the Church has not told us in this case."

As for the Saints' stories, we must insist once more that they are mere outlines which are meant to be *turned into* stories. From observation of the experts I can recommend two quite simple formulas for story-expansion. One is to describe the *external surroundings* (generally through the eyes of a chief character); thus, instead of saying, "When Sir Gareth arrived at the Court he made his request to King Arthur", obviously you can say: "A dead silence fell upon the crowded banquet as Sir Gareth stood in the midst of the hall and looked round on all those noble knights and the fair ladies in their richly-coloured robes; and there sat King Arthur on his throne looking kindly on the stranger and waiting for him to speak", etc. The other way is to describe the *internal feelings* and thoughts of your hero at appropriate places in the story. Instead of saying, "Columbus left the royal camp in bitter disappointment, but on his way to Cordova he came to a monastery", etc., you can say, "Columbus left the royal camp and took the road to Cordova on foot, a weary and disappointed man. As he and his son walked on mile after mile he sank deeper and deeper into despair. All his years of work seemed wasted, all his money was gone; everything seemed lost. But never for a moment did he lose his faith in the great idea; he was still sure it was true, though it seemed impossible to make anyone else see it. With these thoughts passing through his mind", etc. With these two easy formulas (which of course can be used in combination if you are clever) you can make any story live for the children.

It will be noticed that in some cases the interest of the story consists in the *life* of the Saint himself, while in other cases his life is not given but merely a short story *about* him. In the first case, our special effort should be to make the Saint *live,* and to win the children's real sympathy for him and interest in his development. But when the story is merely an incident, the Saint himself should be briefly introduced, and then the very most made of this little

happening in his life. It is here that description and detail make so much difference. The spiritual lesson of the story can easily be brought out without a moral being applied at the end.

And don't forget to remind the children that these men and women whose stories interest them so much are not mere heroes and heroines of a dead-and-gone past, but living members of the Church Triumphant, and that we may ask them to help us get some of those gifts and graces which their lives reveal, and indeed solicit their prayers for all our needs, sure that they will listen as kindly and patiently as when they lived amongst and for their fellow-men on earth.

N.B.—It is of course highly desirable to illustrate the stories with pictures when possible. Unfortunately there is at present no Catholic set of Scripture pictures to be obtained in England. The two sets mentioned hereunder are excellent for the Old Testament, and can be used (with some needful discrimination) for New Testament also.

Nelson's *Bible Wall Pictures:* large pictures, over 200 subjects. Eightpence each.

Copping's *Pictures that Teach:* these are medium-sized, and do very well mounted on brown paper. One penny each (R.T.S., 4, Bouverie St., E.C. 4).

F. H. DRINKWATER.

October 16, 1922.

FIRST YEAR

(Age: about 8.)

FIRST YEAR

Old Testament : The Patriarchs ; Job

New Testament : The Nativity ; Stories from the Life of Christ

Church History : Stories of the Saints—

ST. AGNES

ST. MARTIN

ST. COLUMBA

ST. AUGUSTINE OF ENGLAND

ST. DUNSTAN

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

BLESSED CUTHBERT MAYNE

LITTLE CATHOLICS IN THE CONGO

FIRST YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

1. HOW God called Abraham and promised to make him a great nation (Gen. xii. 1-10); and how he let his brother Lot choose which part of the land he would have (Gen. xiii. 1-18).

2. About a battle between nine kings in which Abraham joined to rescue his brother Lot. Afterwards he was blessed by Melchisedech (Gen. xiv. 1-24).

3. How God sent Abraham a son, Isaac; how Agar and her son were cast out; and how later God tested Abraham by telling him to offer up the boy Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. xxi. 1-3 and 9-21; xxii. 1-19).

4. How the servant of Abraham found Rebecca at the well and brought her to be the wife of Isaac (Gen. xxiv.).

5. About Esau and Jacob; and how Jacob made a deceitful plot to get Esau's blessing when their father was dying (Gen. xxvii. 1-41).

6. How Jacob had the vision of the ladder, in Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 10-19).

7. How Joseph, when he was a boy, had strange dreams which made his brothers jealous; so that they put him in a pit, and then sold him to the Egyptians (Gen. xxxvii. 1-36).

8. How Joseph was put in prison by Pharao, and there he interpreted the dreams of his fellow prisoners, the chief butler and chief baker; and also told Pharao the meaning of his dream, and so was restored to favour (Gen. xl. and xli.).

9. How Joseph's brethren came to Egypt to buy corn, and did not know their brother when they saw him as a ruler; and how kind he was to them (Gen. xlii., xliii., xliv., xlv., and xlvi. 1-6).

JOB

10. "This is **the story of Job**, a good man who had to suffer great trials. It was a very, very long time ago, hundreds of years before our Lord came. Perhaps it really happened, or perhaps it is a story like our Lord's parables, a story to show us that God lets suffering come even to good people."

Job's riches and goodness; Satan's jealousy and God's permission to Satan; the four messengers of bad news. What Job said: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." How Satan afflicted Job with a grievous ulcer, and even his wife tempted him to curse God. And how his three friends came, and sat with him silently for seven days and seven nights; and at the end of that time Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born (Job i. 1 to iii. 1).

(Explain here briefly that the three friends made long discourses, saying that Job must have sinned grievously, else God would never have punished him so severely. This accusation was Job's greatest affliction. He persisted in denying that he had sinned, and keeps firm his trust in God. "Though He should kill me, I will trust in Him." Then God spoke, and said that His wisdom was above the understanding of men. He took Job's side against his friends, and made them understand that even the innocent may suffer, because suffering is not punishment, but one of the ways in which God rules the world for man's good and His own glory.)

Then the conclusion: how God was angry with Job's friends and forgave them when he prayed for them; and how God gave Job twice as much as he had before (Job xlii. 7-16).

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES

1. How the Angel Gabriel came to tell our Lady she was to be the Mother of God (Luke i. 26-38).

2. How our Lord was born in a stable, and our Lady made the manger into a little bed for Him, and how the shepherds came (Luke ii. 1-20).

3. How wise men from the East were led to Bethlehem by a star; and how they laid their gifts at the feet of the little Christ and His Mother (Matt. ii. 1-12).

4. How our Lady took the Baby Jesus to the Temple, to present Him to God, His Father (Luke ii. 22-40).

5. How St. Joseph had to take our Lady and her little child a long, dangerous journey into Egypt, to save Him from Herod's jealousy (Matt. ii. 12-23).

6. How St. Peter walked on the water, on a stormy night, to come to Jesus (Matt. xiv. 22-34).

7. How our Lord took the hand of a little dead girl, and said, "Maid, arise"; and she came to life (Mark v. 22-24 and 35-43).

8. How a sick man was let down through a hole in the roof, at Jesus' feet, while He was preaching (Luke v. 17-26).

9. How a very little man climbed a tree so as to see our Lord pass along the road (Luke xix. 1-10).

10. How another man by the roadside wanted to see our Lord, but couldn't because he was blind; so he shouted till our Lord heard (Mark x. 46-52).

11. How the disciples woke up our Lord when He was asleep on a pillow in the boat, and He made a great storm be still (Mark iv. 36-40).

12. How our Lord took Peter and James and John up a mountain, and they saw Him transfigured and made all shining (Matt. xvii. 1-9).

THE SAINTS

ST. AGNES (304)

St. Agnes was the child of Christian parents, of noble birth and great wealth. She had learnt to understand and accept the Christian Faith with all her heart. By the time she was twelve years old she had decided to give her life to God, and take her place among the holy Christian virgins who gave up marriage and the position of honour and dignity it held. So when a rich young patrician asked her to marry him, and was always trying to give her costly presents, she would not accept his offer or his gifts, but clung to her wish to remain a virgin for Christ's sake. The young Roman was a pagan. He was filled with fury at Agnes's refusal to marry him, and told the authorities that she was a Christian, and was not worshipping the Roman gods, as every subject of Caesar was supposed to do. This meant that before long she was made to appear before the tribunal. She was told to offer incense at the altar of Minerva, and her life would be spared. She knew well that this would be the same thing as denying Christ and saying she was no longer a loyal and obedient member of the Catholic Church; she also knew that to refuse to do as the prefect told her would mean death; but, although only a little girl of twelve, she was not afraid. Instead of taking the incense, she boldly made the sign of the Cross.

She was condemned to death, and bound hand and foot; but the iron fetters (made to fit grown-up people) slipped off her small hands. Even the hard-hearted pagans were touched by this; especially as they saw that no bonds were needed, and she walked joyfully towards the place where she was to die. The prefect, seeing that death did not frighten her, and that his threats would never make her give up Christ, tried another way that he hoped would break her spirit. He had her stripped of her clothes and

taken into the street, to be insulted by the pagan mob; but still she did not fear, saying, "Christ will guard His own". And, sure enough, the crowd had pity on her and left her alone. The story says that one man who scoffed at her was struck blind by a flash of lightning. At last she was led to her death. For a moment she stood still, praying to God and offering herself up for the love of Christ, then she bowed her head for the executioner to do his work. One stroke of the sword cut off her head, and the soul of the little maiden went straight into heaven as one of the most glorious heroines of the Church Triumphant.

In the Mass, just before the *Pater Noster,* the priest prays that we sinners, who hope in God's mercy, may be granted fellowship with the Saints, and admitted to their company. Among the fifteen glorious martyrs mentioned in this prayer every day in the Mass is the little maiden Agnes. Perhaps our Lord let her die like that to show how He can use the weak things of the world to confound the strong. If a child could *die* with Christ like that, then all children can *live* with Christ as perfectly. If they ask St. Agnes to help them, she is quite certain to do it, and surely our Lord could not say "No" to anything *she* asked Him!

Feast.—January 21.

Emblem.—A lamb at her feet (or led by a cord), and a sword in her hand or through her throat.

ST. MARTIN, APOSTLE OF FRANCE (397)

St. Martin, when he was a little boy, though not a Christian and living in a pagan land, built himself a hut on the top of a hill, and used to go there to pray to "the God of the Christians". Our Lord rewarded him by letting him find Christian teachers who taught him the Catholic Faith. Here is a little story that shows us St. Martin's kind heart, and also how our Lord wants people to be baptised Catholics, and not only just believers in Him.

When Martin was a young man, he was sent to France with his regiment (for his father had forced him to be a soldier). He believed in Christ, and tried to live a good life for His sake, so that even his fellow-soldiers noticed how different he was from themselves; but he had not yet received baptism, and was still but a catechumen.

One cold winter's day, as his troop of cavalry came rattling down one of the old streets of Amiens, a poor old beggar, crouching by the roadside, the icy wind fluttering his rags about, held out his hands and cried for alms. Martin's heart was touched, as usual, but having no money left to give, he took off his military cloak, cut it in half with his sword, and wrapped the warm folds about the shivering old man. The other soldiers laughed, but St. Martin rode on, happy to have been able to serve Christ's poor.

That night he had a wonderful dream. In it he saw our Lord in heaven, surrounded with the Angels. On our Lord's shoulders was Martin's half cloak! "Martin," He said, "dost thou know this mantle?" Then turning to the Angels, He added, "Martin, still only a catechumen, hath clothed me with this garment".

When St. Martin awoke he was very happy to think our Lord had taken the kindness as done to Himself; but he also felt there was a gentle reproof in His words. And so, though it was very difficult during his time of military service, he went to the priests and asked for baptism, and they gave it him.

After many long and terrible adventures, St. Martin finally came back to France, was made a Bishop, and spent his life as a missionary, travelling from one town or village to another, and doing such wonderful work that he was the means of turning heathen Gaul into a Catholic country, and so earned his title, Apostle of France.

Feast.—November 11.

Emblem.—Represented as a young Roman officer, dividing his cloak with a sword.

ST. COLUMBA, APOSTLE OF SCOTLAND (521-597)

St. Columba was an Irish boy of royal birth. He was a great scholar, and we are told carried off the highest prize in every school he went to. But God had destined him for something better than scholarship. It was through being exiled from his beloved land that he found his true vocation, which was to preach the Catholic Faith to the wild men of Scotland. Here is the story of one of the events which led to St. Columba's banishment.

He had an intense love for books, and would spend hours making beautiful copies of the big hand-written volumes lent him by others. One day, while staying at Clonard, he asked the Abbot Finian to let him copy a beautiful edition of the Psalms, kept in the Abbey Church. St. Finian refused. Thinking the refusal unreasonable, St. Columba decided to make a copy secretly. And so, night after night, he stole off to the church, with his pens, ink and parchment, and worked away. He had just finished the long task when St. Finian chanced to come to the church, and there, by the light of a little lamp, beheld his visitor all alone in the great dark church, absorbed in his task. Very angry, he confiscated the copy from the monk Columba, saying he had no right to it. St. Columba was angry, too, and disappointed that all his nights had been spent in vain. He appealed to the King for a judgment. The King's decision was, "To every cow belongeth her calf", and St. Columba was obliged to give up the manuscript. He came of a proud, hot-headed race; and this little injustice (which, as it happened, was soon followed by another of a different sort) caused a feud between the royal kindred of Columba and the people of Diarmaid, King of Tara, which ended in a battle, in which many brave men lost their lives. A great gathering of Bishops and Abbots was held to discuss Columba's conduct, for they considered he was to blame for the civil

war. He was, in the end, sentenced to banishment, and told to make up for the battle by converting to the Faith as many souls as had there fallen. Very humbly he accepted his sentence, though it nearly broke his loving and proud heart to leave the land of his princely forefathers. Taking with him a little band, he sailed across the seas.

At last they came to an island, and landed, but when he had climbed up to the highest point he found he could still see the hills of Ireland rising out of the west; and knowing that he could never bear to live within sight of his own land, he went down into the boat again, and they sailed on. The same thing happened at the next island, and the next, until they came to the rocky island called Iona. Even from the highest point of Iona Ireland could not be seen, so there they ended their voyage. He became greatly beloved, won thousands of souls for the Church, built many monasteries, and became one of the greatest Irish Saints and the Apostle of Scotland.

Feast.—June 9.

Emblem.—Represented with devils flying away from him.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF ENGLAND (604)

St. Augustine is one of the Saints to whom all English children should say "Thank you", sometimes, because he went through a lot to bring the Catholic Faith from Rome to the English of long, long ago.

It was the sight of fair-haired, blue-eyed **English children in the Roman slave-market** that had made St. Gregory decide that their little brothers and sisters in that far-away pagan island should be given the chance to know about Christ and be baptised. So when he became Pope, he looked about for a man who could be trusted to go through with this big adventure, and, with God's help, turn the wild English races into good Catholics.

Pope Gregory picked out the monk Augustine, and gave him forty monks as companions.

They started on their long journey; but, half-way, the other monks gave up hope and wanted to turn back, because the people in France told them such terrifying tales about the wild men in England. In the end St. Augustine managed to put new heart into them, and lead them on to accomplish their great quest.

At last they landed in the Isle of Thanet, just off the English coast, and sent messengers to King Ethelbert to say they had come, and who they were. King Ethelbert was a pagan; and so were all his people. But his Queen, Bertha, was a Catholic—a Princess who had come from France to marry him, and had brought a French Bishop with her, to whom the King had given the old ruined Church of St. Martin in Canterbury (a church built by the British in the days when our island was a Christian Roman colony). So **the King answered St. Augustine kindly**; and promised to come and see him in a few days. He was very much afraid of this band of Christians, with a superstitious fear, thinking they might cast a spell over him; so he ordered that the meeting should take place in the open air, under an oak-tree.

When the King and his retinue came, St. Augustine spoke so gently and courteously, explaining how he had come to tell the English about Christ, and how He had died for men and opened to them the gate of heaven, that the King was reassured. He gave St. Augustine leave to come into his kingdom, and promised to provide all he needed and allow him to convert the English if he could, though he (the King) could not bring himself to forsake his old religion and accept these strange new doctrines which as yet he did not understand. He then went back to Canterbury, his capital (a half-ruined Roman town), and arranged a house as a monastery for the missionaries.

So a few days later, in solemn procession, carrying the cross of Christ aloft before them, and singing a rogation litany, the band of monks advanced to their new home. Here they settled down and began to live their regular life according to the Rule of St. Benedict, and to study

the English language, and prepare themselves for the great work God had given them to do.

King Ethelbert watched them with interest, and was so much struck with St. Augustine's unselfishness, humility, holiness and courage, that he was thereby converted to the Faith, and asked for baptism. So at Pentecost the King was baptised. But he left his subjects quite free to choose for themselves, and did not try to force the Christian Faith upon them. Meanwhile, St. Augustine and his zealous band had been working hard, preaching and instructing, and had found the people so keen to hear about Christ, that they soon saw the Catholic Church in England would spread and grow very quickly, and need good organisation. So while his monks were preparing the people for baptism, St. Augustine crossed over to France, and was consecrated Bishop.

Christmas Day was chosen for the ceremony of admitting the English people as a great body into the Catholic Church. So on that day, in the waters of the little River Swale, *ten thousand people* were baptised by St. Augustine and his monks.

After this, messengers were sent back to Rome to bear the joyful news to Pope Gregory.

In England everything now went ahead splendidly. St. Augustine had four of his monks consecrated Bishops, and sent them to look after different parts of England.

After eight years of hard work and most wonderful success, St. Augustine, Apostle of England, died a happy death, and, we may be sure, received a very glorious crown in heaven, and was given a place among the other great Apostles, since he had been the means of winning for Christ a country that afterwards proved itself one of the glories of the Catholic Church, and was known as "Our Lady's Dowry", and produced many great Saints.

Feast.—May 26.

Emblem.—Represented baptising Ethelbert, King of Kent.

ST. DUNSTAN (925-988)

St. Dunstan was one of England's great Archbishops, friend and counsellor of Kings, champion of justice and right. He lived through the reigns of six Saxon Kings, the friend and adviser of most of them. The first of St. Dunstan's royal friends was King Athelstane, who sent for him when he was quite a boy to come to Court, for he had heard how skilful he was in all arts and learning, especially in playing upon the harp, and in writing and illuminating manuscripts, as also in carving, metal-work, and modelling; and how, added to all this, he was very holy, a true lover of God. The King was delighted with the boy, and finding what a lot of common-sense and good judgment he had, would even call him in sometimes to help decide some difficult case, when the King's vassals were up for judgment.

This made some of the courtiers very jealous, and they decided to murder the boy. Lying in wait for him by the side of a road along which he was to come, they rushed out on him, bound him and flung him into a muddy swamp, thinking he would be choked, and would never be seen or heard of again. But Dunstan prayed hard, and God heard him. His feet found a firm foothold in the slimy mud, and he was able to stand up. But he was so covered with mud that he could hardly see or breathe. The murderers were horrified when they saw their victim was not drowned, and sought some way of finishing their cruel deed. One of them came and loosed some fierce hounds belonging to the King, and set them at the muddy figure in the swamp. As Dunstan heard them come rushing towards him, baying, he was not afraid, for he had long ago made friends with these dogs. He called them by their names, and they, recognising their old friend, jumped upon him, licking him till he was clean, and able to see and breathe once more. He then struggled free, and managed to get out of the bog. But he did not go back to Court; he went to his uncle, the Bishop of Win-

chester, and after a time decided to give his whole life to God, and become a priest. Later he became Abbot of Glastonbury, and the friend of the poor; and finally Archbishop of Canterbury.

Feast.—May 9.

Emblem.—Represented seizing devil with pincers; also playing on harp; with dove hovering near him; with Angels.

LIFE OF FRANCIS (1182-1226)

His Boyhood.

St. Francis was a gay, light-hearted boy, always the leader in all the fun of the city, and enjoying the feasts and sports which his father (a rich merchant of Assisi) encouraged him to give to his young companions. But his mother would say that some day he would follow the call of God. In a war between Assisi and another city Francis and his companions were taken prisoners and shut up for a year. He was always joyful, and would cheer his companions with troubadour songs. But it told on his health, and when at last he was liberated, he fell very ill and came near to death. This turned his mind to serious things; and during his convalescence he determined to discover God's will for him, and try and do something useful with his life.

He Starts for the Crusades.

Like many young men of his day, his thoughts turned to the Crusades. He decided to go with a party headed by a nobleman of Assisi. He started off very keen and full of joy. The night before he started he had a strange dream, showing him that he was to be a great leader of men; and now, on the first night of the journey, he heard a heavenly voice, in the darkness, telling him to return to Assisi, and then it would be shown him what he must do. Obedient to this voice, he turned back, though it was hard to leave the party so soon and ride home alone to his astonished friends.

He Learns to Love the Poor.

St. Francis tried to settle down again to his old life; but he was restless and unsatisfied. The feasts and sports no longer pleased him. One day, while returning slowly home at sunset, after a day's ride on the plains, he saw, ahead, a leper horribly disfigured. His usual way was to turn away his eyes from the distasteful sight and fling a coin to these poor wretches. This time he felt a new impulse of sympathy. Jumping off his horse, he pressed a piece of silver into the man's hand, and then taking the hand, maimed and foul as it was, into his own, he pressed a kiss upon it. As he rode on, he was conscious of a new sense of love and sympathy for the poor and suffering.

Moved with these new feelings, he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles; and there, exchanging clothes with a poor man, spent a whole day among the beggars, asking alms of the rich.

Returning to Assisi, he now made feasts only for the poor, whom he served with his own hands.

He Hears our Lord's Voice.

He now began to give himself a great deal to prayer, trying to learn God's will for him.

One day he chanced to enter a small, half-ruined church on the hills outside Assisi. While kneeling in prayer, he heard a voice (apparently coming from the crucifix) calling him by name. "Yes, Lord," he answered. "Francis," said the Voice, "go and repair My church which thou seest falling."

Thinking our Lord meant the little ruined church in which he was praying, he arose at once, full of joy, to fulfil our Lord's command. Giving the old priest (who lived near by) a purse of money, with which to pay for a light to be kept always burning before the crucifix, he promised to return with money for the repairing of the church.

He Leaves Home to Serve God.

St. Francis's father, Peter Bernadone, was away from home. So, taking a bale of rich stuff, he went to a neighbouring city, and sold both it and the horse that carried it, and hastened with the purse of gold to the old priest of San Damiano. But the priest would not take the money, fearing the wrath of Peter Bernadone. St. Francis, disappointed, flung the money into the window-recess of the church, and persuaded the priest to let him stay in this place where God had spoken to him.

On Peter Bernadone's return, he learnt of his son's strange doings, and, armed with a stick, set out to give him a good lesson, and bring him home. St. Francis, warned by a servant, hid himself in a cave, where he remained many days in prayer and fasting, fearing his father and imploring God's assistance and guidance.

At the end of this time he decided on a braver course, and all unkempt as he was, went into Assisi. The street urchins, thinking him insane, pelted him with mud and jeered at him. His father, in great rage at this, rushed out, took him into the house, flogged him, and shut him up in a little cell.

His mother, however, let him out, next time Peter departed on a journey, and Francis returned to San Damiano.

He Becomes Quite Poor

Peter Bernadone, on his return, insisted on having the purse of gold restored to him; and, in the public court, disinherited his son. St. Francis, clothed in a poor, rough habit, such as was worn by the farm hands, gave back his very clothes to his father, saying, "Now will I no more say, 'Peter Bernadone is my father', but, 'Our Father, who art in Heaven' ".

He then set out to tramp over the mountains. His first night, as he passed through a dark wood, singing as he went, he was held up by robbers, who asked him who he was.

"I am the herald of the great King", replied Francis.

So they took his poor tunic, and flung him in a ditch full of snow. The next day he found an old friend who gave him a pilgrim's habit, leathern girdle, shoes, and staff. With these he set forth once again, begging his way, or doing menial tasks in the monasteries, finally returning to San Damiano.

He Builds up the Ruined Church.

St. Francis now took up his abode with the priest. He would go to town with a dish and beg the leavings of the table. Though he hated the very sight of this meal, he would eat it, rejoicing in the sense that he was now truly poor. Having begged for stones, and obtained the help of some peasants, he set to, and built up the little church with his own hands. When the task was finished, he went on and did the same for another. At last he had finished restoring his third church—the Portiuncola (destined to be his future home)—when God revealed His will, and St. Francis set out upon his real calling.

He Finds his Vocation.

Mass was celebrated in the newly restored Church of the Portiuncola (or St. Mary of the Little Portion), and St. Francis served it. As he listened to the Gospel being read, the words entered into his heart with a new meaning and force, and seemed to him a command from Christ, direct to himself. The passage included the words "going forth, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Possess not gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go hence. And when you come in a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. . . ."

St. Francis took this Gospel as clear orders, and decided to carry them out exactly in his life. Laying aside his shoes, girdle, staff, and cloak, he made himself a rough garment of brown stuff, shaped like a cross; tied

a rope round his waist, and set out for the town to preach Christ, begging his food and seeking shelter in the house of any good Catholic who would receive him.

The people listened respectfully; and soon he had become a familiar figure, and the fame of his preaching, and his gentle, joyous personality and ready sympathy, had gone abroad, and men flocked to hear him, and to ask his advice and prayers and help.

He is Joined by Two Men of Assisi.

A rich man of Assisi, Bernard of Quintavalle, often welcomed St. Francis to his house, and had him sleep in his own room. Pretending to be asleep, he would watch St. Francis at prayer, most of the night, saying over and over again, "My God, and my all". He was so much impressed by St. Francis's holiness and the ideals of poverty and service of God and man which he followed, that he decided to join him. So did a learned man, Peter Cathanii. So one day they went early to a church, and opening the book of the Gospels at random three times, came each time on a passage telling them to sell all and follow Christ. This they did, distributing the money in handfuls to the poor who crowded round them outside the Church of St. George.

How the Order Grew.

Not long after, St. Francis and his two new brothers were joined by a third—a working man called Brother Giles.

For some months they lived in a little hut at the Portiuncola, praying, working, tending the lepers, and trying to become perfect so as to do God's work better.

They were joined by four more Brothers, and St. Francis had a wonderful vision, showing him how hundreds would soon be joining him from all the different countries. Knowing that he must get the Pope's approval if he was to develop his little band of followers into a great Order, he and his Brethren went to Rome. At first the Pope would not listen to the unknown beggar-man, but in the end he received him kindly; and at a second visit he told

St. Francis he was the man he had seen in a dream, supporting a church, and he gave the friars his blessing, and said, "Go forth in the Lord, Brothers". He gave them leave to preach penance, and told them to come back to him later, and he would do more for them.

So they went back to Assisi full of joy; and after living for a time in a wayside shelter, called Rivo Torto, they took up their abode permanently at the Portiuncola (which they rented from the Benedictines for a basket of fish per year).

Here many more Brothers joined them; and St. Francis began sending them out, two and two, preaching; he going, himself, with one Brother; and all returning to the Portiuncola, as to their headquarters.

(*From this point the stories about St. Francis may be found in "The Little Flowers of St. Francis". An outline of them will therefore be given in* headings, *and the chapter of the* Fioretti *referred to. The teacher is advised to read this and recount it to the children. St. Francis's life is rich in stories that will delight them; but the scope of this book does not permit of their being given in full. Besides, the spirit of St. Francis can best be caught and passed on to the children, if the stories are read in the* Fioretti, *rather than in the words of any other chronicler.*)

St. Francis Goes on Journeys with One or Another of the Brethren.

Fioretti, Chapter VIII: "How St. Francis set forth to Friar Leo, as they journeyed together, where perfect joy was to be found."

Fioretti, Chapter XVI (latter part): "How St. Francis preached to the birds."

Fioretti, Chapter XXI: "Of the most holy miracle that St. Francis wrought when he converted the fierce wolf of Gubbio."

Some Stories about St. Clare,

the noble maiden who left her father's house because of St. Francis's preaching, and became Abbess of a convent

at San Damiano (the place where St. Francis had heard our Lord's voice in the ruined church) :

Fioretti, Chapter XV : " How St. Clare ate with St. Francis and his fellow friars at St. Mary of the Angels."

Fioretti, Chapter XXXIII : " How St. Clare blessed the bread."

Fioretti, Chapter XXXV : " How St. Clare, being sick, was miraculously borne on Christmas Eve to the Church of St. Francis."

Stories of Some of the Friars

who joined St. Francis's Order, and how he taught them obedience and holy poverty and other virtues :

Fioretti, Chapter XXX : " Of the fair sermon that St. Francis and Friar Ruffino preached at Assisi."

Fioretti, Chapter XVII : " How a little boy friar, while St. Francis was praying by night, beheld Christ and the Virgin Mary and many other Saints discoursing with him."

Fioretti, Part II : Life of Bro. Juniper—XI : " How Friar Juniper, to abase himself, played at see-saw."

Fioretti, Part II : Life of Bro. Giles—I : " How Friar Giles was received into the Order."

Various Doings of St. Francis:

Fioretti, Chapter XXIV : " How St. Francis converted the Soldan of Babylon to the true Faith."

Fioretti, Chapter XVIII : " Of the wondrous chapter that St. Francis held, at St. Mary of the Angels, where more than five thousand friars were assembled."

Fioretti, Chapter XIX : " How St. Francis suffered with his eyes; and of a miracle that happened to the vine that had been stripped of grapes."

St. Francis Retires to Mount Alvernia.

St. Francis's life of hardships, and the anxiety of his Order, had told on him. Though still comparatively young, he began to feel his life drawing to an end. Longing for a little peace alone with God, and obedient to an

inward impulse, he took a few chosen Brethren with him and retired to the top of Mount Alvernia.

St. Francis had a little hut made for himself, away from those of the Brethren, on a rocky ledge, reached by a plank. Here he passed his time absorbed in prayer. Brother Leo, coming one day to recite the office with him, saw him in ecstasy. Sometimes he was filled with sorrowful thoughts, and he felt within him that God had called him thither to reveal to him some mystery or bestow some favour upon him.

St. Francis Receives the Stigmata.

One day, casting himself upon the ground before the altar, he besought God to make known His will. Then he bade Brother Leo open the book of the Gospels, thrice, at random. Each time it was of the Passion that he read, and St. Francis became assured that he was in some way to share Christ's suffering.

A few days later, as he knelt in prayer, the form of a crucified seraph, bright and shining, appeared, flying down from heaven and standing on the rock above him. As he gazed up at the beautiful and sorrowful face, a throb of agony shot through his soul and body, so that he had never experienced such pain or sorrow before. Then the seraph spoke to him and revealed many mysteries.

When the seraph had departed St. Francis found that his hands and feet were pierced right through with wounds, and in the palms of his hands and on the instep of his feet were the round black heads of nails, the points appearing on the backs of his hands and the soles of his feet, bent back. And in his side was a wound, as if made by a spear. And the pain of them all was very great. And St. Francis understood that he had been thus enabled to share bodily in Christ's passion. At first he said nothing to the friars; but after a while he told them, though not showing them his hands, which he kept in the sleeves of his habit. Only Brother Leo was permitted to see the sacred stigmata, in order that he might wash and bandage the wounds, because of their pain and bleeding.

The Death of St. Francis.

St. Francis, riding on a donkey now, because of the nails in his feet, descended from the mountain and returned to the Portiuncola. His body was almost worn out, and greatly weakened, too, by the bleeding of his stigmata. But his soul seemed full of new life and joy and energy. So he set out for one more journey through the country he loved so much, and along the familiar roads he had so often tramped. Many wonderful things happened on this journey, including several miracles; but towards the end of it he became so ill that he had to be carried in a litter; and so came back to the Portiuncola to die. Many friars had gathered round their beloved Father, and he spoke comforting words to them and blessed them. And he made the Brothers sing the song (the canticle of Brother Sun) he had composed while lodging a few days in the little hut St. Clare made him at San Damiano; and when he knew his last moments had come he cried, "Welcome, Sister Death!" And he made them lay him on the ground without even his habit, and spread sackcloths over him, and sprinkle ashes upon him, and read to him the Passion according to St. John. And so, faithful to the last to his Lady Poverty, he died as he had lived, brave and joyful; the gentle and loving Father of those who had chosen to follow him; the friend of beasts and birds and little children; and, as he had once called himself, the Herald of the Great King.

Feast.—October 4.

Emblem.—Stigmas on hand, feet and side; friar carrying a cross; winged crucifix appearing to him.

THE CHILDHOOD OF ST. ELIZABETH
(1170-1231)

St. Elizabeth Comes to her New Home.

St. Elizabeth was the daughter of the King of Hungary. When she was only four years old she was promised in marriage to the son of the Count of Saxony, and taken to

live at his palace. There she was brought up with Louis, whom she was later to marry, and who was then eleven years old.

From the time St. Elizabeth was quite small she loved our Lord very much. The first two words she learnt to say were "Jesus" and "Mary". As a tiny child she would stop in the middle of her games, and run off to the castle chapel and kneel in prayer before the altar, with a big psalter open in front of her (though she could not yet read). Seven other little girls were given her as playmates. Sometimes she would make them play a game children nowadays call "Follow-my-leader". Hopping on one foot, she would lead them about the castle, always ending up at the chapel door. If it was closed and she could not get in, she would kiss the door and walls, because inside the chapel she knew there was our Lord's own Presence, in the Blessed Sacrament. Her little friends thought a good deal of her, and used to say that sometimes the child Jesus appeared and played with Elizabeth.

She was very generous to the poor, giving them any money that was given to her, and wandering about the kitchens and storerooms of the castle looking for food to take to her poor friends.

She used to try and find little things to do which cost her something, so that she might offer them up to please our Lord. For instance, she loved her pretty clothes and jewels, but on feast-days she would lay them aside and not wear them, and offer up the little sacrifice. She loved dancing especially, but sometimes she would stop in the midst of all the fun, as a little bit of practice in giving up her own will.

Of the Trials of Little St. Elizabeth.

The people in the palace were jealous of Elizabeth and scoffed at her piety; but the Count loved his little adopted daughter, and would never let anyone be unkind to her. After his death, however, things became very hard for her. Especially her future mother and sister-in-law scoffed and sneered, because of Elizabeth's love of the poor,

simplicity in dress, virtue and humility. They would say she had nothing of the Princess about her, and need not hope ever to become the wife of the young Count.

But Elizabeth was always patient and joyful, and never showed how much this unkindness hurt her. She bore it for our Lord, since it was His will for her.

Though all at the castle were so bitter towards St. Elizabeth, Louis, the young Count, remained faithful and devoted to his "little sister", as he used to call her; and when he was twenty and she was twelve, they were married. He was a true Christian knight, and worthy of her, and she was very happy. Elizabeth tried in all things to please him; and he, in return, gave her all the freedom she wanted to look after the poor, and give them food and clothes, and money from his treasury. He shared her great devotion to our Lord, and encouraged her in her prayers.

The Miracle of the Roses.

Now many wonderful things began to happen in St. Elizabeth's life, and miracles which showed our Lord was pleased with her. And Louis, seeing them, thanked God for having given him this child-saint to be his wife. Here are some of the stories told about her:

One day she was struggling up a steep hill, bowed down with a heavy load of food she was taking to some poor houses, when she saw coming towards her a hunting-party—Louis and his friends. In her humility she did not want them to know she was going out like this to serve the poor. So she drew her cloak round the things she was carrying. But Louis, who had jumped off his horse to greet her, drew aside her cloak. To his great surprise he saw that her arms were full of beautiful roses! It was not the season of roses. Our Lord had done this miracle to show how pleasing Elizabeth's humble service was to Him. Louis took one of the roses and kept it to the day of his death. Before mounting again, he saw over Elizabeth's head a wonderful, shining crucifix floating in the air, and he rode on, full of awe, praising God in his heart.

The Leper.

Here is another miracle that holds a deep lesson :

Elizabeth was not only kind to the poor in giving them things; she would go and nurse the sick, and bind up the horrible running sores of the lepers; and, to show them that she liked to serve them thus, and was not disgusted at it, and thought of them as if their poor bodies were our Lord's own body, she would kiss their sores and then wash them gently and bind them up.

One day she found a poor man—a leper—suffering terribly. Perhaps he was a wandering beggar; anyhow, he had no bed to lie on and rest after she had dressed his wounds, so she took him back to the castle, and laid him on her own bed ! Her mother-in-law was very angry, and when Louis came in, she said, " Come with me, and I will show you a wonderful proceeding of your Elizabeth's ". Taking him to their rooms, she said, " See, someone whom she loves much better than you. See, your wife lays lepers upon your bed, and it will give you the leprosy." This time Louis really felt a little bit annoyed. He snatched off the covering, and then stood still, full of wonder and awe; for, as the old books say, " The Lord opened the eyes of his soul ", and he saw lying upon his bed the form of Jesus Christ, with pierced hands and feet, and wounded side. All stood speechless for some time, until the vision faded; and then Louis, with the tears running down his face because of what he had seen, told Elizabeth to do all she liked in her charity, and let no one trouble her.

The Vision of Christ Crucified.

One day, as Elizabeth and Louis knelt together hearing Holy Mass, she allowed her thoughts to wander, and began thinking how happy she was to be the wife of this good and noble lord. She even let her eyes wander from the altar, and dwell on her husband, as he knelt there absorbed in prayer. Suddenly the bell rang for the elevation, and Elizabeth (feeling very sorry she had forgotten our Lord at this solemn moment, and let her thoughts stray) raised her

eyes to the altar. But instead of seeing the Host held high in the priest's hands, she saw the sorrowful, bleeding form of the crucified Christ. The sad and terrible vision touched her heart to the quick, for she realised how the consecration is the renewing of the sacrifice of Calvary. When Mass was over, she threw herself prostrate before the altar, to beg our Lord to forgive her neglect of Him. So she remained, her tears of contrition falling upon the ground, as hour after hour passed. The time for dinner came; the guests arrived, everyone waited. At last Louis went to the chapel to fetch her. Seeing her tears, he knelt down by her and asked her why she had been weeping so. When she had told him, he knelt and prayed for a while with her. Then he rose, and saying, "Sweet sister, let us have confidence in God; I will be no hindrance to thee, but will help thee to do penance, and to become still better than thou art", he left her to kneel on before our Lord, and went back to his guests.

Feast.—November 19.

Emblem.—Crowned, and holding two crowns; roses in her robe; giving alms to beggars.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380)

St. Catherine was an Italian girl who gave herself to God when she was a tiny child, and remained faithful to Him always, through times of great distress of soul and temptation, through difficulties of one sort and another, and so was able to do much good for the Church, and even help the Pope. Here are two little stories which show how, though she longed to be always alone with God, He wanted rather to use her to help others:

When she was a very little girl she ran away from home and found a beautiful little cave in which she very much wanted to take up her abode as a hermit. She was delighted with it, and felt sure God would send her ravens to feed her, like they did Elias. But in the midst of her joy, a thought came to her so strongly that she felt sure it was from God, and she must obey it; she remembered her mother and father, brothers and sisters, and thought how

anxious they would be at her disappearance, and how sad they would be without her, so she went home, and did her best to please them all and make them happy, instead of being a hermit, as she would have liked best to have done.

When she grew a little older she refused to marry as her father and mother wished her to do soon after she was twelve; and gradually her father came to understand that God really was calling her and wished her to live for Him alone. And so he allowed her to have her will, and live almost entirely alone and perpetually silent in a kind of cellar under his house. Here she practised great austerities and mortifications, and spent long hours of both day and night in prayer. After several years like this once again she felt our Lord's command to think of others, so she came forth and set herself to serve her family and her poor and sick neighbours with all the love and friendliness she could. She missed her cell and its sweet solitude very much. Then a good idea occurred to her. She pictured to herself a little cell within her own heart. There she could retire and pray while outwardly she was going busily about her duties. Another way in which she made these seem easier was to call the people she had to serve by various names (to herself), her brothers by the names of our Lord's Apostles, and so on. So Christ taught her to find Him and love Him by seeking and loving other people.

Feast.—April 30.

Emblem.—Crucifix upon a heart; receiving crown of thorns and rosary from Infant Christ.

BLESSED CUTHBERT MAYNE (*m.* 1577)

Blessed Cuthbert Mayne was one of the brave young priests who, after going through their studies and being ordained, at Douay, in France, managed to get back into England under some strange disguise or other, well knowing Elizabeth's spies would hunt them down and bring them at last to the gallows.

When Blessed Cuthbert reached England, he went alone to the West Country (his native part), and was so successful in preaching the Catholic Faith and reconciling heretics

to the Church, that the Protestant authorities set up a diligent search for him, and gave out that all sorts of tortures would be inflicted on him when he should be caught.

One day when Blessed Cuthbert was living in the house of a good Catholic in Devonshire, the sheriff, accompanied by the Protestant Bishop of Exeter, arrived to search the house. They found Blessed Cuthbert's door locked. They were just beating loudly upon it when he came in from the garden and opened it for them. He was in layman's clothes, and supposed to be the steward.

"Who are you?" shouted the sheriff. "I am a man", replied Cuthbert quietly. But the sheriff had seized him by the doublet. Tearing it open, he disclosed a little silver case hanging round the young priest's neck by a silver chain, and containing the Agnus Dei. He was dragged away and thrown into a dungeon. Though condemned to die, he was left for months in a filthy prison. The day before his martyrdom he was brought before a party of Protestant officials, ministers, and other people who seemed to enjoy worrying and disturbing the Catholic prisoners while they were preparing to die.

But Blessed Cuthbert Mayne (once a timid boy who had not dared so much as declare himself a Catholic) came off best in this "conference", and greatly enraged these officious personages. All day they had kept him standing before them, while they flung questions at him, abused his holy religion, accused him of treason, and scarcely gave him the chance of making a fair, straight answer. At last they offered him his liberty if he would swear that the Queen was the Head of the Church in England. He asked for a Bible. The Protestants grinned with malicious pleasure—they thought they had at last cowed this bold Papist, and forced him to give in. Cuthbert took the Bible. Then, making the sign of the Cross, he kissed the book, and holding it high, let the words ring clear through the crowded hall: "The Queen never was, nor is, nor ever shall be Head of the Church in England."

The next day he was bound to a hurdle, and dragged at

a horse's heels through the streets of Launceston. In the market-place stood the gallows, and here the holy young martyr was hanged. And at the foot of the gallows stood his mother—brave as our Lady at the foot of the Cross—thanking God that she could thus give back to Him such a son!

Feast.—November 29.

LITTLE CATHOLICS IN THE CONGO

The children should remember that their little fellow-Catholics in the heart of Africa, though very black outside and strange-looking to us, with their woolly hair and thick lips, are, inside, just the same as white children, for their souls have been made beautiful and pleasing to God by baptism. Our Lord is as pleased to come to them in Holy Communion as to His little friends in Christian lands. Being the children of God's great family on earth (the Catholic Church), they are our true brothers and sisters; more so, indeed, than the non-Catholic children who live next door. So Catholic children should think about these little brothers and sisters of theirs, and try to get to know something about them. Here are a few things about little Catholics in the Congo:

The children belonging to the Catholic Church in this part of Africa are (we are told by the missionaries) quite important people, for it has been found that the very best way of establishing the Catholic Faith among the negroes is to teach it to the children, and bring them up as good Catholics. For in this way they are kept from ever learning all those things which make it so hard for the grown-up black people to accept the Catholic Faith; and even if they have accepted it, to stay faithful to it. Here are some of the things:

1. *The People's False Religion.*—Though believing in God the Creator, they do not believe that He cares about each one of us. So their religion is fetish worship, superstition, fear, wearing of charms and amulents and slavish obedience to their "sorcerers" or "wise men". These

have great power, and perform many cruel rites: e.g. the test of drinking poison, or walking through fire, in order to find out whether an accused person is guilty or innocent of the crime. The people are *afraid* to give up this religion and accept the Catholic Faith.

2. *Customs and Tradition.*—For one thing, the men have many wives. Cannibalism is practised in some parts.

3. *Temperament and Characteristics.*—Idle and lazy; fickle and unfaithful; belief that might is right. Where the men and women have not had early training, these points in their characters make it difficult for them to live the life of good Catholics.

But there are splendid exceptions to this rule. For instance, the native catechist who, when he found his mission must be closed for lack of funds, earned enough money with his sewing-machine to keep it going. Then, again, the natives are keen to hear about the Catholic Faith, and welcome the missionaries, coming in from the country for miles to hear them, and offering to build them houses and even schools.

The Schools.

These are chiefly for the teaching of agriculture. They are little groups of huts round a chapel. The pupils live as a little community, under a picked native Catholic. The missionaries visit them from time to time, and supply them with implements and seeds; and the pupils live on the grain, vegetables, and fruit that they grow. They are, of course, taught the Faith at the same time, and trained to live as Catholic children should.

The Government hands over orphans and abandoned children (of which there are a great many in the Congo) to the missionaries, to be brought up in this way.

English children must not forget to pray for these little black brothers and sisters of theirs; and especially for the priests and nuns who give their whole lives up to taking our Lord's religion into these far-away parts of the world. Perhaps, some day, one or another of the children will get the call to go and serve our Lord in this way.

SECOND YEAR

(Age: about 9.)

SECOND YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT: MOSES AND JOSUE

NEW TESTAMENT: STORIES OF CHRIST'S LIFE; THE APOSTLES

CHURCH HISTORY: STORIES OF THE SAINTS—

ST. GEORGE

ST. PATRICK

ST. DAVID

PATRON SAINTS OF DIOCESES (ST. EDWARD, ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY, ST. ERCONWALD, ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN, ST. BONIFACE, ST. WINIFRED, ST. KENTIGERN, ST. WILFRID OF YORK, ST. JOHN OF BEVERLEY, ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, ST. CHAD)

ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE

ST. GENEVIÈVE OF PARIS

ST. HILDA OF WHITBY

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS

CATHOLICS IN THE HEBRIDES

SECOND YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

I.—MOSES

1. HOW Moses was found by Pharao's daughter (Exod. i. 22; ii. 1-10).

2. How Moses pitied the children of Israel, because the Egyptians were cruel to them; and how he had to flee from Pharao's wrath (Exod. ii. 11-15). And how he was made welcome by Jethro, and took care of his sheep (Exod. ii. 16-22 and iii. 1).

3. How God heard the groaning of the children of Israel (Exod. ii. 23-25), and spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and said, "Come, I will send thee to Pharao, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt" (Exod. iii. 1-22).

4. How Moses and his brother Aaron went into Egypt (Exod. iv. 18-20 and 27-31); and after they had spoken to Pharao, Pharao was still more cruel to the children of Israel (v. 1-23). And of the ten plagues with which God afflicted Pharao, because he would not let the children of Israel go (summarise briefly from Exod. vii., viii., ix., x.).

5. How Moses taught the people to sacrifice the Pasch; and then led them out of Egypt (Exod. xii. 21-42). And how they passed through the Red Sea, and Pharao and his army was drowned (Exod. xiv. 5-31).

6. How God fed the people with manna (Exod. xvi. 1-5, xvi. 35), and gave Moses power to make water come out of a rock for the people to drink (Num. xx. 1-13).

7. How in a battle the Israelites overcame their enemy so long as Moses held up his hands (Exod. xvii. 8-13).

8. How God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and gave him the Ten Commandments (Exod. xix. 17 to xx. 18), and wrote them upon two tables of stone (Exod. xxxi. 18).

9. How Moses found the people worshipping a golden calf, and in his anger threw down the tables of stone and

they were broken (Exod. xxxii. 1-20). And how he went back up the Mount and prayed that the people might be forgiven their sin (Exod. xxxii. 30-35). And how God told him to make two more tables of stone (Exod. xxxiv. 1, 27 and 28).

10. How Moses and the children of Israel built the Tabernacle as God had commanded (Exod. xxxv. 1-5, 20-35; xxxvi. 1-3; xl. 15-36).

11. How Moses sent out twelve spies to view the promised land, and only two brought back a true report (Num. xiii. 17-34 and xiv. 1-10).

12. How Moses saw the promised land, and died and was buried (Deut. xxxii. 48-52 and xxxiv. 1-6).

II.—JOSUE

13. How Josue was made the leader of the people (Num. xxvii. 12-23) and took Moses' place when he died: God telling him to "take courage and be very valiant", and making him great promises (Jos. i. 1-18); and how he led the people through the Jordan on dry land (Jos. iii. 7-17).

14. How Josue and his army (at God's command) marched round Jericho silently for six days, and how on the seventh day the people sent up a great shout, and the walls of Jericho fell flat, and Josue took the city (Jos. vi. 1-27).

15. How the men of the cities round Jericho feared Josue, and made a cunning plot to escape being killed by him. And how Josue was at first deceived, and afterwards discovered the plot, and made these people serve the Israelites as hewers of wood and drawers of water (Jos. ix. 1-27).

16. How, after Josue had, by God's power, conquered all the promised land and portioned it out among the children of Israel, he gathered them together and made them vow most solemnly to remain faithful to God. And how he died at the age of a hundred and ten years (Jos. xxiv. 1, 22-30).

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES

1. Jesus grows up in His home at Nazareth, and our Lady loses Him for three days in Jerusalem, and finds Him in the Temple (Luke ii. 40-52).

2. How our Lady told our Lord there was no wine left at a feast; and how He changed water into wine (John ii. 1-11).

3. How our Lord preached to a great crowd in a desert place, and then fed them by a miracle; and afterwards taught His followers about the Blessed Sacrament, and promised to feed their souls with the Bread that cometh down from Heaven—His own Body—in Holy Communion (John vi. 1-67).

4. A story Jesus told His disciples—about a man who fell among thieves (Luke x. 30-37).

5. Another story Jesus told—about a boy who left home and wasted all his money, and how in the end his father welcomed him home once more (Luke xv. 11-32).

6. How our Lord rode into Jerusalem on an ass, and the people strewed branches of palm before Him and cried, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!" (Matt. xxi. 1-17).

7. **St. Peter.**

His visit to Jesus, and naming (John i. 40-42).

His call (Mark i. 16-18).

His miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v. 1-11).

8. **St. Peter** (*continued*).

He is made head of the Church (Matt. xvi. 15-19).

He sees our Lord transfigured (Mark ix. 1-9).

He goes to Gethsemane with Jesus (Mark xiv. 29-38).

9. **St. Peter** (*continued*).

He draws his sword to defend Jesus (John xviii. 10-11).

He follows afar off; and then denies Jesus (Luke xxii. 54-62).

He is the first to enter the empty Sepulchre, and know that Jesus is risen (John xx. 2-10).

Jesus asks him three times, "Lovest thou Me?" (John xxi. 1-19).

10. **St. Peter** (*continued*).

After the Ascension he ruled the Church first in Jerusalem (other stories can be added from the Acts—e.g. iii. 1-15; x. 9-23; xii. 1-17), then Antioch, and finally Rome. During the persecution of Nero (the legend says) St. Peter was persuaded to flee from Rome for safety; but on the road he was met by a vision of our Lord carrying His Cross. To Peter's question, "Whither goest Thou, Lord?" the reply was, "I am going to Rome to be crucified in thy stead". So Peter returned to the city. Tradition says that he suffered martyrdom by being crucified (head downwards, at his own request).

11. **St. John.**

His call (Matt. iv. 21, 22).
Present at the Transfiguration (Mark ix. 1-7).
At the Last Supper (John xiii. 23-25).
At Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 33-42).

12. **St. John** (*continued*).

At the foot of the Cross (John xix. 26-27).
Goes to the Sepulchre with Peter (John xx. 2-8).
The first to recognise Jesus standing on the shore at dawn (John xxi. 1-7).

St. John lived to a great age at Ephesus. During a persecution, tradition says, he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, but remained unharmed. In his extreme old age he had only one sermon always: "Little children, love one another."

13. **St. James (the Greater).**

Brother of St. John, and one of the three closest to our Lord always.
Becomes a fisher of men (Matt. iv. 22).
Nicknamed by our Lord (Mark iii. 17).
His martyrdom (Acts xii. 1-2).
Tradition says he had preached the Gospel in Spain; in

Spanish his name is Sant Iago, and he has a great shrine at Compostella.

14. **St. Andrew.**

He joins our Lord and brings Peter (John i. 37-42).

He comes with three other disciples and asks Jesus when the things He has spoken shall begin to be fulfilled (Mark xiii. 1-4).

He tells Jesus of the boy who has loaves and fishes in the desert place (John vi. 8).

Tradition says he preached in Greece, and was martyred on a cross of special shape, from which he preached to the people for three days.

15. **St. James (the Less).**

One of our Lord's own cousins, and the brother of St. Jude. After the Ascension he became the Bishop of Jerusalem. Spoke in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13), and encouraged St. Paul (Gal. ii. 9). He continued all his life to observe the Jewish Law, and prayed every day in the Temple. In the end he was martyred by the Jews (says Hegesippus).

16. **St. Matthew.**

His call, and the feast he made for our Lord (Luke v. 27-32). His name was Levi: probably our Lord changed it to "Matthew", which means "gift of God".

Tradition says that he preached to the Hebrews for fifteen years, and wrote his Gospel for them; then went to the countries near the Caspian Sea and was martyred there.

17. **St. Thomas.**

The name (Didymus in Greek) means "Twin". The chief texts referring to him are John xi. 16 and xiv. 5; and of his incredulity, John xx. 25.

Tradition says he preached in India and was martyred with a spear there. Even now on the Malabar coast there is a strange body of Christians who still say Mass in Syriac. They were isolated from the rest of the Church for over 1,000 years, but were discovered by the Portuguese, and are now in communion with Rome again.

THE SAINTS

ST. GEORGE

St. George Faces the Emperor.

St. George was the son of Christian parents living in the Roman province of Palestine. He was a brave and noble boy, and, like many young Romans, chose the life of a soldier. His Christian ideals of faithfulness to his duty, and fearlessness, made the Emperor think highly of him, and he quickly rose to high rank.

For some time the Christians had had peace; but one day Diocletian issued an edict against them, and a horrible persecution began. Of course, St. George was very dismayed. How could he serve an Emperor who murdered people because they believed in Christ? He made up his mind to go straight to him and tell him face to face that he would resign his commission if the massacre went on. His friends tried to persuade him not to, for the Emperor thought so much of him that it seemed likely he would be given the highest command in the Army some day; though if he did anything that would so greatly offend Diocletian, and would, besides, show he was a Christian, he need hope for no mercy. But St. George put his honour before all else, and went straight to the palace.

He said what he had to say, simply and boldly. Diocletian was surprised. He tried to laugh it off. He tried to put St. George off with an excuse. Finally he got angry, and had St. George thrown into a dungeon.

St. George Suffers Torture and Death.

After lying in the darkness for some time, St. George was offered his liberty if he would give up his Faith and sacrifice to the gods. If, on the other hand, he refused, he would be put to torture. Of course, he refused; and, having been taken from his dungeon, he was placed in a great wheel full of spikes, which was turned round and

round until his body was a mass of wounds. Then he was flung again into the dungeon.

As he lay in agony, a wonderful voice spoke to him through the darkness: "Fear not, for I am with thee." He knew it was the voice of Christ. It seemed to heal all his pain and make him strong again for whatever torments were still in store for him.

Again he was offered his liberty, and again he refused to be unfaithful. This time a great boulder was rolled over his naked body.

The third time the Roman officer came to his cell it was to threaten him with death. But St. George was only filled with joy at the thought of martyrdom.

So weak he could hardly walk, he was led out of the darkness into the sunlight. With a sweep of the executioner's sword his head was cut off, and his soul, having won its hard battle and triumphed against the dragon of unfaith, entered the joy of heaven.

News of the young soldier's brave stand and heroic death soon spread among the Christians. It greatly strengthened their faith, and heartened them to resist, too, even unto death. Many pagans, hearing of St. George's brave witness to the religion of Christ, asked for baptism into the Church for which he had chosen to die.

Tradition says the officer who was sent to his prison with offers of liberty was converted by seeing St. George martyred. In fact, his martyrdom so strengthened the young Church of Christ, and did such harm to the enemy, that he has always been represented as a knight slaying a dragon, in defence of a maiden.

Devotion to St. George.

Directly after his death the devotion to him began to spread. One of the first churches that were built as soon as the Christians were allowed peace and liberty was to St. George. In old days Englishmen in battle used to shout "St. George for England!" On St. George's Day there used to be great processions through the streets, a statue of St. George being carried. Later, when Queen

Elizabeth forbade the carrying of images of the Saints, only the dragon used to be carried in the processions of the Guilds, grinning with glee at being once more at large, without his brave conqueror. As late as 1835 the dragon used to make his appearance every year in the town of Norwich; and sure enough the Faith that St. George died for did seem to have been conquered by the dragon of heresy in St. George's own England. But, after all, our patron has looked after us well, and once again there are thousands of Catholic churches and Catholic schools all through the land. Catholic children should remember St. George on April 23.

Feast.—April 23.

Emblem.—In armour on horseback, with sword and spear, dragon at feet.

Patron.—Of soldiers; of horsemen; of Boy Scouts.

A red rose is worn in his honour.

ST. PATRICK (*died* 465)

Boyhood.

The home of St. Patrick's boyhood was either the West Coast of Scotland or the North Coast of France. He was brought up in a happy Christian home. But, he tells us, he had not attended as well as he should have to the Catholic teaching he was given, and had done something wrong which he went on being sorry for to the end of his life, though he does not say what it was. While he was quite a young boy, Irish pirates raided the place where he lived and carried him off, with other boys, to be sold as slaves. As Patrick was borne across the rough seas in the pirate ship, his thoughts turned to our Lord—the one Friend from whom he could not be torn away, and he never again returned to his careless and forgetful ways.

He was sold to an Irish chieftain named Milcho (a pagan), and sent out on to the bleak hills to mind the sheep. Here he learnt to find his one comfort in prayer, both night and day. "Before dawn", he tells us in his *Confession,* "I was called to prayer by the snow, the

ice, and the rain, and I did not suffer from them, nor was there any sloth in me, as I now see, because then the spirit was burning within me."

Six years he spent in this way; and then a voice from heaven told him to go back to his home, saying, "Behold, thy ship is ready". He made the long, unknown journey to the coast on foot. At first the seamen refused him a passage, and he turned away sorrowful, but praying God to help him. Soon they overtook him, and said he might go with them. On the way the ship was wrecked on a desert island, and the crew nearly died of starvation. But Patrick prayed, and a herd of swine were discovered, and the sailors killed them for food, and were able to go on. And so Patrick reached home at last.

St. Patrick's Call. He Returns to Ireland.

In a vision St. Patrick seemed to see and hear the Irish people beseeching him to come and teach them the true Faith. He longed to do so, and began his studies for the priesthood, which were followed by a long preparation (lasting thirty-eight years) for his great mission. At the end of that time he went to Rome, and received the commission to preach to the Irish. Here is a little story about his landing. His companions had gone to reconnoitre, for the place where they landed was very lonely. St. Patrick fell asleep; and while he slept a little Irish boy crept up and looked at him. He thought the stranger had such a kind, good face that he wished he could do something for him. Collecting a lot of wild flowers, he arranged them round the sleeping Saint. When St. Patrick woke up, he had a talk with the little boy (Benignus), who after that would not leave him, and went with him on the ship when he sailed northwards. Many years later he succeeded St. Patrick as Archbishop of Armagh.

The Conversion of a Fierce Chieftain.

St. Patrick landed again a little farther north. This time he was set on by a band of fierce men. Dichu, their

chief, raised his axe to fell St. Patrick, but a miracle happened, and his arm became stiff so that he could not lower it. He fell on his knees and admitted the power of St. Patrick's God; and after he had received instruction, asked for baptism. St. Patrick then visited the place where he had been a slave. His old master was dead, but he converted and baptised his children.

St. Patrick and the Druids.

It was drawing near to Easter, which happened to be a festival for the pagans too. The King of Erin with his chiefs and Druids was holding a solemn ceremony at Tara. They saw St. Patrick's fire blazing on a hill, for it was Holy Saturday. "If that fire is not put out before morning", prophesied a Druid, "it never will be put out," knowing that the fire represented the Catholic Faith, already blazing in France to the destruction of the Druid religion. So the King sent for St. Patrick. As he and his little band advanced towards the King and his company (the chiefs sitting "with the rims of their shields against their chins"), the Christian missionaries chanted the Easter Litanies. Then St. Patrick told them why he had come to their country; after which the Druids challenged him, trying all their magic arts against his gift of miracles. But whatever they did, he did something still more wonderful, by the power of God. They would have killed him, had he not caused an earthquake to happen, and in the confusion escaped with his followers.

The next day he returned boldly. He was given a cup of poison to drink, but, having made a sign of the Cross over it, drank it without harm. A test was then arranged by the Druids. They made two piles, one of dry faggots and one of green wood. On the dry faggots they laid the boy Benignus, clothed in a Druid's white robe. On the green wood they put a Druid, clad in St. Patrick's cloak. They then said they would set fire to both piles. St. Patrick accepted the challenge. The green wood blazed up, burning the Druid to death (though St. Patrick's cloak was found among the ashes, unsinged); but the dry wood

did not catch fire, except that a flame burned up the Druid's robe on Benignus, leaving him unhurt. Another earthquake, which swallowed up many of his men, at last convinced the King that it was no use opposing St. Patrick, and he gave him leave to preach.

So, on the plains of Tara, St. Patrick preached the famous sermon in which he used a shamrock as a parable of the Blessed Trinity.

From now onwards he met with complete success, going up and down the country, preaching and doing signs and miracles, and baptising thousands of people. Many dangerous adventures he passed through by God's protection.

St. Patrick Fasts on the Mountain Top.

One Shrove Tuesday he retired to the top of a rugged mountain (now called Croagh Patrick) in Connaught, and here took place his great pleading with God for Ireland. All Lent, without food, he prayed with all his might, for the fate of the men of Erin on the Judgment Day. At the end of the long and painful spiritual struggle, God sent an Angel to tell him his prayer was granted, and especially that St. Patrick himself should be deputed to judge the whole Irish race on the day of Judgment. Before coming down, St. Patrick solemnly blessed Ireland. We are told that all the evil spirits fled from before his blessing, and that hundreds of poisonous snakes came out of their holes and were drowned in the sea. Every year, up to the present day, thousands of Irish people go on pilgrimages on St. Patrick's Day to this scene of his victory.

As St. Patrick travelled over the country winning souls to the true Faith, his charity and holiness, his gentleness and courage, won all hearts to himself, and the people of Erin looked upon him as their father and leader in all things. Besides establishing the Catholic Church in the country, he gave the Irish a code of wise laws by which they were governed for a thousand years.

At the age of 120 St. Patrick passed to his well-earned rest; but he left an undying memory of his name among

the Irish. Perhaps in no Catholic country is there so true a devotion to any Saint as there is in Ireland to St. Patrick.

Here is **a prayer of St. Patrick's,** which is known as his "Breastplate".

"Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ above me, Christ beneath me,
Christ at my right hand, Christ at my left;
Christ in the chariot, Christ in the fort, Christ in the ship.
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me."

Feast.—March 17.
Emblem.—Driving serpents from rocks.

ST. DAVID, PATRON OF WALES (*circa* 544)

St. David was the son of a Welsh Prince. From the time he was quite a boy he gave himself to God with his whole heart. After he had been ordained priest he retired to the Isle of Wight, where he became a monk, under the direction of Paulinus, a disciple of St. Germanus of Auxerre. At last he came forth from this seclusion, and began a great work, preaching to the Britons. He was noted for his learning and power of preaching, and so he was one day sent for by the Bishops who had collected at Brefy, and were holding a conference with regard to the Pelagian heresy that had broken out with renewed force in their dioceses. When St. David arrived he found he had been sent for because a vast crowd of people had collected, and no one could make them hear. The legend relates that St. David himself could not have done so, but for divine assistance. As he preached, the ground rose up like a little hill beneath his feet, and raised him up; and his voice was heard by an innumerable crowd.

St. David was elected Bishop of Caerleon; but wishing to dwell in a quiet spot with his monks, he removed the see to Menevia, to a lonely and desert place. Here he founded twelve monasteries, with a very strict rule. The monks were not allowed to use oxen or horses to till the ground, but had to do it all themselves. They were never allowed to speak except for absolute necessities.

It is related that one day a battle was about to be fought in the neighbourhood where St. David was. He told his people to wear leeks in their hats—they would then know each other, and not run the risk of mistaking their own side for the foe. They did so, and were victorious. Ever since that time the Welsh have worn a leek on St. David's Day.

In the grey dawn, as St. David sang Matins, being about eighty years old, he received a message from Heaven that his death was at hand. The news soon spread, and all the country round was moved to great sorrow. On the following Sunday he sang High Mass, preached and blessed the people, saying, "Be joyful and keep the Faith; on Tuesday I shall go the way of my fathers".

And so he laid himself down in his cell to die. Great weakness came upon him, and then, standing before him, he beheld our Lord. Fearing the vision would depart and leave him still in this world of which he was so weary, he cried, "Take me up with Thee!" And in that moment he died.

Feast.—March 1.

Emblem.—Preaching on a hill, dove on his shoulder.

N.B.—The following is a list of the Patron Saints of the Dioceses of England and Wales. The full stories of their lives are not given, merely a brief note of their histories, characters, and one little story-incident likely to endear their names to the children. Those Saints who come elsewhere in the book are not given again here.

PATRON SAINTS OF THE DIOCESES OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Westminster.—(i.) Our Lady Conceived without Sin (December 8); St. Joseph (third Wednesday after Easter). (ii.) SS. Peter and Edward.

Brentwood.—Our Lady of Lourdes; St. Edmund of Canterbury; St. Erconwald.

Northampton.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Nottingham.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Hugh of Lincoln.

Portsmouth.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Edmund of Canterbury.

Southwark.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Thomas of Canterbury; St. Augustine of England.

Birmingham.—Our Lady Conceived without Sin (December 8); St. Chad is a secondary Patron.

Clifton.—Our Lady (December 8); SS. Peter and Paul.

Plymouth.—St. Boniface.

Shrewsbury.—Our Lady Help of Christians (May 24); St. Winifred.

Cardiff.—Our Lady (December 8).

Menevia.—Our Lady (May 24); St. David; St. Winifred.

Liverpool.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Joseph; St. Kentigern.

Hexham and Newcastle.—Our Lady (December 8); St. Cuthbert.

Middlesbrough. — Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (June 27); St. Wilfrid; St. John of Beverley.

Leeds.—Our Lady (June 27); St. Wilfrid; St. Francis of Sales.

Salford.—Our Lady of Mount Carmel; St. Joseph; St. John the Evangelist; St. Augustine of England.

ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1066)

St. Edward was the last of the Saxon Kings who reigned over England. He was a very good and holy man who put God first in everything in his life. He made very good and wise laws, and especially did away with heavy taxes that had been levied on the poor. His reign was a spell of peace and prosperity for England in very troublous times. He loved the poor for Christ's sake, and they, in return, loved their holy, just, and generous King.

Here are **two little stories** which show St. Edward's kindness to the poor. He had given so much money in alms to the poor, and built so many churches and monasteries, that the royal coffers were nearly empty. His nobles, hearing of this, determined to give him a splendid surprise. So they sent out their soldiers and stewards, and forced all their poor vassals to pay a heavy tax. Then, on Christmas Day, they showed St. Edward his coffers all full of gold, and asked him to accept this present from his loyal subjects. The King was very distressed at the sight, for he knew how terribly hard it must have been on the poor to pay this unexpected tax. He thanked his nobles graciously for their gift, but added that he could not bear to have his poor pillaged like that, and that every penny must be given back to those from whom it had been taken. We may imagine the surprise of the people on seeing the tax-gatherer coming round again—but this time to give them back their money on behalf of King Edward!

One day, as the King's treasurer, Hugolin, came along a road, he passed a poor, thin old beggar covered with sores—a leper. The old man cried out that he had a message for the King. Hugolin was surprised, and asked

him what it was. The beggar said that he had made his way four times to Rome, in vain, hoping to get cured at the tomb of the Apostles. Now St. Peter had appeared to him in the night and told him that his prayers had been heard, and if St. Edward the King would bear him to the chapel in his arms, his cure would be granted. "Impossible!" cried Hugolin. "Shall the King, indeed, take thee, thou loathsome leper, to his breast?" Still, when he got home he told the King. The King at once went out, and took the poor old man in his arms, heedless of his dirty rags and sores, and carried him up to the High Altar of the Abbey; and he was cured.

Later, as King Edward was praying before the altar, the Child Christ appeared to him, all shining, and said, "As thou didst bear the leper in thine arms to his healing, so bear I all the world in My heart for their salvation".

On St. Edward's Day crowds of Catholics go and pray at the shrine of St. Edward—a big stone tomb in Westminster Abbey, where St. Edward's body still lies. Hundreds of children come all day, and kneel round the tomb, and pray to St. Edward, whose soul is in heaven with our Lord, that, as they have come to where his body lies, he will pray for them and get them all they want.

Feast.—October 13.

Emblem.—King, holding sceptre and ring; giving ring to beggar; carrying sick man.

ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY (1242)

St. Edmund was one of the greatest Archbishops of Canterbury, a very holy and learned man, who stood up to a grasping King, and died in exile rather than give way in what he knew was right. He was born in Abingdon, a little village in Kent, in the thirteenth century, of pious Catholic parents, who brought him up to love God and keep a careful watch over himself in all things. Here is a little story of his boyhood:

One day, as St. Edmund and a party of his little schoolfellows were playing in the meadows, St. Edmund chanced

to stay behind, his mind dwelling on the things of God, which he loved to think and wonder about. Suddenly at his side appeared a little boy of great beauty, who said to Edmund, "Hail, well beloved!" Edmund, surprised, asked him who he was, saying he did not know him. The boy replied it was strange that Edmund did not know him, since he was always with him at play, and sat at his side in the desk at school. He then told Edmund to remember him always, and form with his finger on his forehead the letters J. C. every night. If he did this faithfully, He (the Divine Child) would be with him at the hour of his death. (St. Edmund did this all his life, and recounted the story, when he was a man, to one of his friends who asked him what it was he always traced on his forehead before going to rest.) After telling St. Edmund this, the Christ Child vanished, and St. Edmund, full of awe and holy joy, fell on the ground and pressed his lips to the place where the feet of the Divine Boy had stood. Edmund's playmates, meanwhile, had turned round to look for their companion, and, to their surprise, saw a dazzling light where Edmund was standing. They ran up, but by the time they reached him the Holy Child had gone, and St. Edmund, rising from the ground, refused to tell them what had happened. But all his boyhood he never forgot the Divine Playmate who was always at his side, unseen.

Feast.—November 16.

Emblem.—Making a vow before image of B.V.M.; Child Christ appearing to him.

ST. ERCONWALD (693)

St. Erconwald lived in England (in the seventh century) at a time when St. Augustine's preaching had set the whole country on fire with zeal for the Catholic Faith. He and his sister left the royal Court of their father to enter the religious life. Erconwald, after founding the Monastery of Chertsey, and living there a holy life of study and prayer, was called to be Bishop of London. He now lived

a very active life, establishing the Faith in England and performing many miracles. He died at his sister's convent, at Barking, in 690.

Many years later, in 1087, God showed what care He has of even the *bodies* of the Saints who lived and worked for Him, and whose souls are now with Him and will one day receive again their bodies in the glorious Resurrection.

St. Erconwald's relics lay in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London. In 1087 a terrible fire broke out, and blazed in the church so furiously that the lead of the roof was melted and poured down in streams. But, among the flames, the wooden tomb in which was St. Erconwald's body remained unhurt, even its velvet pall not being so much as singed.

Feast.—April 30.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY (1170)

St. Thomas à Becket (as he is more often called) was one of the most famous men of the Middle Ages, his cruel murder by the King's courtiers stirring up the sympathy and indignation of all Catholic Europe. The story of his youth is one that will appeal to all boys.

St. Thomas had good Catholic parents, who brought him up well; but before he was twenty-one he had lost both father and mother. After having been at school in London, and then at Oxford University, he took an important post in London; but before long was taken into the family of a young nobleman who lived in the country. This young nobleman was devoted to hunting and hawking, and St. Thomas became so keen on these sports that they took up all his thoughts, and he began even to neglect his duty to God. One day, as he was out hawking, an adventure befell him which changed all the course of his life.

His hawk swooped after a wild-duck, and dived after it into the river. St. Thomas, afraid of losing his favourite hawk, jumped into the river. But the tide was too strong for him to swim against, and it carried him swiftly downstream. Before long he saw a terrible danger ahead—a

great millwheel turning round and round. He knew that in a few seconds he would be caught in its cogs and ground to pieces. There seemed no hope of escape, and he swiftly prepared to die. But suddenly the great wheel stopped, and St. Thomas found himself clinging to it, safe and sound, and able to clamber out of the water. He felt sure this had been by God's special mercy. If God had so saved his life, it must be that He had some special thing for him to do in the world.

Leaving the gay life of hunting, he went back to London, and set himself to study for the priesthood. In due course he was ordained, and, coming under the special note of the Archbishop, he was soon involved in important work, leading on, gradually, to the great lead he was to take in the affairs of his country, when he himself became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Feast.—December 29.

Emblem.—Upper part of his head cut off and held in his hands; crosier with battle-axe head.

ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN (1120)

St. Hugh was a very holy Carthusian monk of the great Abbey of the Chartreuse, in France. He was sent for by King Henry II (of England) to found an abbey of English Carthusians at Witham, in Somersetshire, because there was great opposition to this foundation, and the first two Abbots appointed to do the work had failed. Hugh made a great success of it; and the King thought so much of him, for his holiness, that once, when in great danger of shipwreck, he invoked Hugh's name with God, and was saved, ever after attributing it to St. Hugh's power with God.

Here are two stories about him:

As a young man of nineteen, and a brilliant scholar in the renowned schools of the Canons Regular, he chanced to visit the Chartreuse, and, seeing the silent, austere lives of the monks, and their purity of heart and love of God, he longed to join them and give himself up to that life of

extreme penance and prayer. They admitted him, and he passed through his novitiate, and progressed well in his studies for the priesthood. One day the old monk whom he served asked him if he wished to receive Holy Orders. Hugh at once, and with much enthusiasm, said that he had such a great longing to be able to say Mass, that to be ordained a priest was the thing he wanted most in all the world. The old monk looked at him very sternly, and asked him how it was he dared so eagerly seek an honour that no man was really worthy to receive, and must accept with fear and trembling.

St. Hugh, dismayed, and deeply distressed to think he had spoken with presumption, fell on his knees and, with tears, begged pardon of God. The old monk, seeing his real humility and the purity of his heart and desires, told him that he need not fear—he would certainly be a priest, and not only that, but would be raised up to be a Bishop.

Here is another little story of St. Hugh, later on :

When St. Hugh took over the difficult work of founding the abbey at Witham, he was violently opposed. Instead of proudly asserting the authority the King had given him, he set about the task with a serene humility and all gentleness of love. The actual building of the abbey had still to be finished. Hugh set to work with his own hands, carrying great stones or sacks of mortar on his back. Struck with this humility in a man renowned for learning and piety, and withal empowered by the King to do as he would, the enemies' hard hearts were softened. They began to visit him, to see what sort of a man this could be. His noble and gracious appearance and beautiful, calm face attracted them first; and soon his charity and graciousness of manner won them completely, so that they helped him finish the abbey; and many men, who before had not thought of God, came and joined the monks, and gave themselves up to this hard life, for the love of God and St. Hugh.

Feast.—November 17.

Emblem.—Swan beside him, chalice in hand, from which issues Infant Jesus.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF ENGLAND (*see page* 26)

ST. BONIFACE (755)

St. Boniface, born at Crediton, in Devonshire, in 680, from the age of five loved to hear about our holy religion. Through boyhood and youth clinging to his resolve to give himself to God, he was in time ordained a priest. The King and the Archbishop thought much of him for his holy life and deep learning; but St. Boniface's one desire was to leave his country and go to preach Christ to the wild tribes across the North Sea. In Germany and other countries of Northern Europe, he passed a long life of thrilling adventure, and wonderful success in God's cause. Gradually he came to have much influence over Kings and Emperors, and greatly affected the Europe of his time. Here is the story of his martyrdom:

Although St. Boniface had reached the age of seventy-five, he longed to leave, once more, the Courts of Kings and visit the wildest tribes. So, taking a party of zealous Catholics, he journeyed northwards to Friesland, where the knowledge of Christ had not as yet penetrated. The wild men flocked to hear him, and thousands were baptised into the Church. But St. Boniface knew that the day he had always longed for was at hand—the day of his martyrdom.

He fixed the Eve of Whit-Sunday for the confirmation of a great crowd of converts, and pitched his tents in the open fields. As he sat waiting their arrival, came a sound of wild voices, and there appeared, surrounding his camp, instead of the newly-baptised Christians, a fierce band of armed men. The followers of St. Boniface wished to fight; but the holy old Bishop knew their hour had come, and, like our Lord surrounded by the armed band in Gethsemane, he told his followers to put up their swords and prepare for martyrdom. The fierce band fell upon the fifty-two Christians and slew them. Then they rushed into the tents, searching the baggage, and even the bodies of

the slain, expecting to find gold, jewels, and rich stuffs, but they found only relics of the Saints and holy books. These they scattered broadcast in the fields and ditches. Later, another party of Christians who came to the spot collected many of these. Among them was a book of the Gospels written in St. Boniface's own hand; and also two other books of his, one of which (containing St. Ambrose's treatise *On the Advantage of Death*) is stained with his blood. These are preserved as precious relics at Fulda, in Germany, where the body of Boniface is regarded as the most precious treasure of the monastery. If you ever go to Plymouth, you will find the whole story of St. Boniface's life in pictures in a big stained-glass window of the Catholic Cathedral there.

Feast.—June 5.

Emblem.—With pallium and crosier, three Kings before him, placing crowns on two of them; book pierced with sword, and Bishop felling an oak.

ST. WINIFRED (*Seventh Century*)

St. Winifred, a Welsh maiden of royal descent, had vowed herself to God, and retired with some of her companions to a convent. But a Prince called Caradoc had set his heart on marrying her, and he was filled with rage at the step she had taken. One day, meeting her, he spoke angry words of reproach and insult. She was very frightened and fled for refuge to the church near by; but before she could reach the door he had seized her, and drawing his sword in a sudden burst of rage, cut off her head. Where she fell there sprang up a fountain of water. The story goes that God sent swift retribution upon the murderer, and that the ground opened and swallowed him up. St. Beuno, Winifred's spiritual guide, coming on the scene, was filled with horror and distress at the sad sight before him. He prayed over her body, and God heard his prayer. Winifred arose from the ground, only a thin red line showing that her head had been severed from her body. To the end of her life she kept this scar.

Ever since her time miracles of healing have taken place at St. Winifred's Well, which is now a pool of deep, clear water, enclosed by the walls of an ancient chapel, in which are numerous crutches, irons, and other things left by the cripples who have been cured.

Daily, Benediction is given in this little chapel, and St. Winifred's relic venerated.

Feast.—November 3.

Emblem.—Book and palm, head at her feet.

ST. DAVID (*see page* 60)

ST. KENTIGERN (601)

The little boy Kentigern, though of royal parentage, was brought up by the hermit St. Servan, who called him "Mungo", meaning "dearest", because he loved the child very much. The other boys who had been sent by their parents to study under St. Servan became very jealous of Kentigern. The two following little stories are told about his boyhood:

"It was in those days difficult to make a fire unless one had a flame to start it with; it was, indeed, next to impossible. So it was the duty of each of the boys in turn to rise in the night and mend the fire lest it should go out before morning. Once, when it was Kentigern's turn to tend it, the boys put it out, to bring him into disgrace. When Kentigern arose in the morning, and the fire was quite dead, he allowed himself not a moment's dismay; but held a stick over the dead ashes, called upon the aid of the Blessed Trinity, blew upon the wood, and it leaped into flame.

"On another occasion the boys did a thing more detestable. There was a robin redbreast which was the special pet of St. Servan, who used to feed it out of his hand, let it perch on his shoulders, and watch it delightedly as it sang and fluttered its wings while he chanted the Psalms.

"The boys wrung the robin's neck, intending to accuse Kentigern of the murder. When he found the dead bird, tears streamed from his eyes; not only tears of grief for the robin, but grief for his beloved benefactor. Picking up the pathetic remains in his hand, he made a prayer to God and the sign of the Cross over the little stiff body, and the robin, reviving, flew off to meet St. Servan on his return from Mass."

Later Kentigern became Bishop of Glasgow, and was the first to preach the Faith in the West of Scotland. He was forced by enemies to fly and take refuge with St. David, in North Wales. There he built a monastery and gathered round him nearly a thousand monks. When he returned to his bishopric many of these accompanied him, and took up the heroic work of evangelising the Orkneys, Norway, and even far-distant Iceland.

Feast.—January 13.

Represented holding a salmon, a ring in its gills.

ST. CUTHBERT (*see page* 102)

ST. WILFRID (634-709)

St. Wilfrid was Archbishop of York in the very early days when the Catholics of Northern Britain, though believing exactly the same doctrines as the Catholics in Rome and the rest of Christendom, had various usages of their own, in matters of ceremony, liturgy, the monastic life, etc., due to the fact that Celtic Christians had been isolated for a long time by distance and barbarians, from the centre of Christendom. St. Wilfrid did more than any other man to get uniformity with Rome in these matters, and thereby incurred the wrath of Kings, and had, in fact, a very stormy life, including prison, exile, and the enmity of holy (though mistaken) men, who should have been his friends.

He succeeded, however, in his difficult task. He turned even his exile to good account, seizing this opportunity

of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the fierce Frieslanders in Holland, and of teaching his fellow-Englishmen.

Here is the little story of how he won the hearts of the men of Sussex:

When he came into their part of the country he found them in great distress, for a drought had caused a terrible famine. He told them they need not starve, since the sea that washed their long piece of coast was full of fish. They told him sadly they had caught nearly all the fish. Very puzzled, he went down to the shore to see what they meant; and there he found that the only way of fishing they knew was to wade about in the shallow water, with small nets, catching the eels that hid in the sand! St. Wilfrid had been brought up by the monks at Lindisfarne, and, as a boy, had learnt to make boats. So he taught the men of Sussex to build themselves fishing boats, and showed them how to tie their little eel-nets together; and then he took them out to the deep water, and there they caught so much fish that they were able to feed the starving people. After that they listened to his teaching, and, like St. Peter the Fisherman, he became a fisher of men; for before he left he was able to gather a great multitude into the net of the Church. And the day they were baptised the longed-for rain fell, and the people thanked God for all His mercies, spiritual and temporal.

Feast.—October 12.

Represented holding ship and archiepiscopal staff.

ST. JOHN OF BEVERLEY (721)

There were two great monasteries at Whitby, one for monks and one for nuns, both ruled over by the Abbess St. Hilda. Among the young monks was St. John of Beverley. Later he became Archbishop of York. It was he who ordained the Venerable Bede. St. Bede tells us a little story about him. The holy Bishop John used to spend Lent alone in some solitary place. Now, he had always had a great love of the poor and ignorant, whom

he would teach with as much zeal as the students who attended his famous school. So one Lent he took with him to his solitary retirement a poor boy, whom most men would have thought quite unteachable, since he was dumb. The first week of Lent St. John spent absorbed in prayer. Then, feeling God's power with him, he took the dumb boy and made the sign of the Cross upon his tongue, bidding him henceforth speak. After that, word by word he taught him, and letter by letter, until at last the boy could say all that he would.

Many hundreds of years after (in the twelfth century) another Archbishop of York made his first visit to Beverley, and sang High Mass in the church dedicated to St. John. In this Archbishop's train there was a boy who had been deaf and dumb from birth. When the *Gloria* began, this boy suddenly found he could hear and speak, and to his surprise found himself joining in this hymn of joy that he had never before been able to hear. His comrades realised at once that there had been a miracle, and took word to the Archbishop. So, after the Gospel had been read, he turned to the people and said, "See, my children, how holy, how powerful a patron must be ours, since God wills him to work so great a miracle for our sakes".

Feast.—May 7.

Represented with shrine at his side.

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES (1567-1622)

St. Francis was the son of a French Count. The Countess, his mother, longed to have a little son, but she used to say to God that she would rather never be a mother than have a son who should ever become His enemy by sin. Her longing to have a holy son was satisfied—her little boy was all she could wish. But to fix in his mind the horror of wilfully disobeying God, she used often to repeat to him the words of Queen Blanche to her son St. Louis: "I had rather see you dead than hear you had committed one mortal sin."

St. Francis became a priest, and afterwards Bishop of Geneva. He was so kindly and gentle with heretics and sinners that people blamed him for it. Nevertheless, a noted controversialist, Cardinal Peron, had to admit that it was St. Francis's way, of love and patient teaching, that succeeded, and not the method of argument. "I can confute Calvinists", he once remarked, "but to persuade and convert them, you must carry them to the Bishop of Geneva."

St. Francis knew it was true, and he put the idea into one of his quaint little parable-proverbs, thus: "You will catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar."

One of the ways in which St. Francis kept the thought of our Lord ever in mind was, when he heard a clock strike, to make the sign of the Cross and think for a moment of the Passion.

He loved nature very much, and everything he saw reminded him of God and man's life in God, so that he was for ever making up little parables, or using similes and metaphors from the natural things he saw around him, much as our Lord did, using sheep, the sower, the vine, birds, field-flowers, fishes, children at play, and many other simple things to make us understand about Himself.

Feast.—January 29.

Emblem.—Sacred Heart crowned with thorns in a glory above him.

ST. CHAD (672)

St Chad is the patron of the Cathedral Church of Birmingham. His body lies under the High Altar of his Cathedral there—the only instance of a Catholic church in this country enshrining the body of its name-Saint. Several places have been named after St. Chad—probably places either blessed by him, or where he baptised his Saxon converts.

St. Chad was the youngest of four brothers, educated by St. Aidan at Lindisfarne. One of them became the

Bishop of London, and the two others priests. St. Chad was Bishop of the Mercians, his see being at Lichfield. He longed for his former quiet life in his monastery, and when he could, retired for times of prayer. It was as he knelt in the solitude of a wood (the legend tells us) that a strange adventure befell him.

He was praying by a pool, when he was startled by a stag dashing wildly past him and into the water. It seemed terrified, and he guessed it must be pursued by huntsmen. However, it allowed itself to be gently led out of the water by the Saint, who set it to graze among the trees. No sooner had he done this than a huntsman came rushing into the glade, crying, "Where is the hart gone?"

Now, this young huntsman was none other than Wulfade, one of the two sons of King Wulfhere, who had fallen away from the Faith, and had allowed his children to grow up unbaptised. So, to the boy, St. Chad made answer:

"My son, Christ sent the hart to bring thee unto me—for as it leaped into the fountain, so would my Lord desire that you should come under the waters of baptism."

"Ha!" cried the young Prince, "I would believe thy fairy-tales if thou couldst pray the stag back here."

So St. Chad prayed, and the stag came pushing through the bushes. Wulfade was humbled and impressed. He listened to St. Chad's teaching, and asked for baptism, as did also his brother. But the King was so angry at their seeking to follow Christ, that in a fit of mad rage he slew them both. In the end, however, he repented; and the Queen his wife bade him seek out St. Chad and confess his sin. This he did, and was led to the Saint by the very stag who had been the means of his sons' conversion. St. Chad gave him as penance the great task of rooting out the idolatry in his kingdom. So the penitent King set himself to build churches, monasteries, and schools. Thus the death of the two boys was, in the end, the means of great good to the realm of Mercia, and sowed the seeds of that Catholic Faith which even the Reformation could not destroy from the Midlands any

more than it succeeded in destroying the holy body of St. Chad.

Feast.—March 2.

Emblem.—Episcopal robes and mitre; book (or a church) in right hand, pastoral staff in left.

ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE (*died* 523)

St. Brigid is the co-patron of Ireland with St. Patrick. During the last twenty years of his life she did far more than any other to help in his great work for Ireland. Their love for God and for Ireland was so great, and their understanding of each other's holy aims and desires was so perfect, that the Book of Armagh calls them the two "pillars of the Irish", and says that "between them there was so great a friendship of charity that they had but one heart and one mind". St. Brigid and her nuns came to visit St. Patrick when his end was near, and as they prayed together they had a vision showing them that Ireland would never lose the brightness of the Faith which St. Patrick had brought. When St. Brigid died she was buried in her church at Kildare, but 300 years later, on account of danger from the Danes, her body was taken and buried again in St. Patrick's own tomb at Downpatrick, where St. Columba's body had been taken also. But alas! this most precious shrine in all Ireland was sacked by Henry VIII's men, and the holy relics of the three Saints were lost in the flames.

Here is a story about St. Brigid. She was a wonderfully beautiful maiden, and a rich Prince wanted to marry her. She had, however, vowed herself to God. Not even this would make him give up his suit, so Brigid prayed to God to make her very ugly, so that this worldly man who cared so little for her soul, and only for her beautiful face, might no longer want to marry her. God granted her prayer, and horrible sores and ulcers broke out on her eye, so that she became hideous to behold. *Now* the nobleman left her in peace, and her father was only too glad to let her be a nun. On the day that she

took the veil, as she knelt on the altar steps to make her three vows, our Lord suddenly healed her, and she rose up more radiantly beautiful than she had ever been!

But Brigid still thought only of her soul's beauty, and desired only to please our Lord. Here is a little story of later on. One day at a great meeting of Bishops and Abbots, a holy old priest stood up and told the assembled company how our Lady had appeared to him and said that she would come the next day to the Synod. He had hardly done speaking when a little party of nuns arrived, accompanying the Abbess St. Brigid, who was attending the gathering. The old man cried out that here was the Lady of his vision. And so from that day everyone thought that when our Lord made St. Brigid so beautiful again, it was the beautiful face of His own Mother He gave her, and ever after that she was called "Mary of the Irish".

Feast.—February 1.

Emblem.—Holding a cross and casting out a devil; as Abbess, cow by her side; bunch of corn (or bread) in her hand.

ST. GENEVIÈVE OF PARIS (419-512)

As St. Germanus of Auxerre was travelling to Britain to put down the Pelagian heresy, he stopped at the village of Nanterre, eight miles from Paris. Here he spoke in the open air to a crowd of villagers. While he was speaking he noticed a little girl with her eye fixed intently upon him. He was so struck with her look of piety, intelligence, and eager interest, that afterwards he spoke to her, and finding that her heart was set on giving herself to God, he told her to persevere in these good intentions. He then gave her a medal and told her to wear it round her neck instead of ornaments of gold and pearls like the other girls. He spoke to her parents of her, and then passed on to his great work.

The holy Bishop had not been mistaken when he noticed the little girl in the crowd and thought God was calling

her. She grew up to be a very wonderful woman, and though jealous people accused her of being an impostor or witch and everything evil, she persevered in doing all she felt was God's will. Once, when Attila and his Huns were on the point of sacking Paris, and the frightened people had given up hope and were too faint-hearted to go on resisting, St. Geneviève so heartened them with her cheering words, her faith in God, and her prayers, that they showed a brave front to the enemy, and Paris was saved.

Feast.—January 3.

Emblem.—Holding a lighted candle, and keys; a medal hung round her neck.

ST. HILDA OF WHITBY (614-680)

St. Hilda, a noble Saxon maiden, became a Christian at the age of thirteen. She decided to give her life to God, but it was many years before she could receive the veil (in fact, she spent thirty years in the world, and thirty as a nun).

She became Abbess of a great double monastery at Whitby, one section being for nuns and one for monks, but both equally under her rule. No less than five of her monks became Bishops; and so greatly was she renowned for wisdom that Princes would come long journeys to consult her.

Here is a story which shows her sympathy and insight:

Among the farm-hands of the abbey estate was a simple man called Caedmon. It was a secret sorrow to him that he could not sing or play the harp like his comrades. One night as the men sat round the fire, drinking their home-brewed ale, and singing songs of Saints and heroes, he saw the harp being passed his way, and full of sadness he got up and went out, before it should come to his turn, and he have to say he could not sing.

He fell asleep in the straw of an out-house, and dreamed that a shining stranger stood before him, offering him a harp and asking him to sing. He said he could not sing

and knew no songs; but the vision bade him sing of the Creation. So he tried, and lo, he found he could play and sing, and that wonderful words came into his head! When he woke up in the morning he remembered the words, and found he really could sing them, too. His comrades ran off and told the Abbess, St. Hilda. Instead of thinking it a foolish tale, as some people might have done, she sent for Caedmon. She was so struck by his song of Creation that she got some learned and holy men to come and hear it. She also told Caedmon some stories from the Bible, and he made beautiful songs of these, too. She (and the holy men) felt sure it was a gift from God. So Hilda asked Caedmon to enter the monastery and become a monk. He did so, and wrote many hymns and songs, telling all the sacred stories anew in vivid language, forming quite a school of sacred poetry, for other bards followed his new style. Many of these hymns are known to us, and can be found in the old manuscripts.

Feast.—November 17.

Emblem.—Abbess with crosier, a priest elevating at an altar on each side, a bird near the host; holding a model of her abbey.

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND (1093)

St. Margaret of Scotland was a Saxon Princess, who, after spending her childhood and girlhood at the Courts of two Saints (St. Stephen of Hungary and St. Edward the Confessor), had to flee from the Norman Conquerors, and was welcomed by the King of Scotland, Malcolm III. He was a wild, rough warrior, and the manners at his Court were so boorish as to seem to the young Princess more like the ways of savages than Christian men. The Catholic Faith was neglected and forgotten, the Sacraments never used; every sort of crime and sin was openly committed, and Scotland and its royal Court hardly seemed like a part of Christendom at all.

Malcolm fell in love with the beautiful, intelligent, and holy Princess, and asked her to marry him. There were

many things he could not understand about Margaret, and the great affection, full of wonder and reverence, that he felt for her was quite a new thing in the life of the wild King. It was, as a matter of fact, a great grace from God. He could have forced his royal guest to marry him, for she was but a refugee, and at his mercy. But he loved her too truly for that, and waited patiently till she came to decide it was God's will she should become his wife, and gradually learnt to love him in return. So in time they were married. But Malcolm had hardly understood what it would mean to marry a Saint. At first he was very puzzled at her ways; jealous when she went away alone to pray in her cave; angry to find she had troops of poor beggars to her own apartments that she might dress their wounds and give them food; surprised at her spending half the night in prayer and vigil. But gradually he joined her in all these things—prayer, almsdeeds, service of the poor. He gave up all his wicked doings, and the Court became not only good, but civilised, courtly in manners, rich and beautiful in outward things. All this Margaret did by her untiring efforts; while she brought up her eight children as true and devout Catholics. Not only the Court but the whole of Scotland was changed. The Catholic religion was again practised—Margaret calling a great meeting of Bishops and clergy and speaking to them herself, the King acting as her interpreter. Here are two little stories showing how gently she taught her rough courtiers to behave like good Catholics; and how thoughtful Malcolm became for his Queen:

The Saying of Grace, and the Lost Book of the Gospels.

Margaret was sorry to find that the nobles who fed at her table never said grace after their meals. So she started a little plan to encourage them. All those who waited and said grace were given an extra cup of wine, and the Queen drank a toast to them. In this way the old Catholic custom of saying grace was restored at Court.

Margaret was very fond of her precious books. Most

beloved of all was a little book of the Gospels. Malcolm could not read, and did not know what it was; but he knew it was the book she loved best. One day she did not find it in its usual place, and was searching for it in great distress. Just then the King entered, and after asking what she was looking for, and pretending to think she was over-distressed at the loss, suddenly drew his hand from beneath his tunic, and she saw that he had her little book, but now resplendent in a binding of gold and precious stones. After that he asked her to read to him from it, and he grew to love the story of our Lord's life nearly as much as she did herself. You can see the very book now if you go to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Probably no woman ever did so much for any country as St. Margaret did for Scotland, or so much for any man as she did for her husband, the King.

Feast.—June 10.

Emblem.—Holding a black cross, and visiting the sick; sceptre and book.

BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS

Bernadette Soubirous was a delicate little girl, the child of poor peasant folk living **at Lourdes** among the mountains of Southern France. At fourteen she had not yet made her First Communion, though people noticed her love of prayer and carefulness in avoiding sin. No one would ever have heard of her, had not our Lady, Queen of Heaven, wanting to show herself to the Church of our day, chosen this humble little girl, remembering perhaps that she herself was but the simple Handmaid of the Lord, daughter of working people, when God came to her to be her Son.

Bernadette, with two little friends, had gone wooding one day (in 1858) along the millstream. The other girls were ahead, and Bernadette was just taking off her stockings to wade after some driftwood, when she was surprised by the sound of rushing wind. She looked up, and to her still greater surprise, noticed that while the leaves

of other trees were still, a wild rose-tree, growing out of the rocky wall, was being gently shaken. The rose-tree, growing in a little grotto some twelve feet deep, had its roots in a small niche high up in the wall. As Bernadette gazed at it in wonder, a strange radiance appeared around the niche, and suddenly within it stood a wondrously beautiful young girl (about sixteen or seventeen she looked to Bernadette). A soft white dress fell to her bare feet, and a blue girdle was round it. A white veil covered her hair and fell over her shoulders to the ground. On her feet rested two golden roses. Her hands were clasped, and on her arm hung a white-and-gold rosary. As Bernadette's eyes met those of the Lady she smiled down at her, and then slowly and reverently made **a big sign of the Cross**, and began passing the beads through her fingers. Bernadette fell on her knees, and taking out her rosary, made a sign of the Cross just as the Lady had done, and began telling her beads.

The other little girls thought Bernadette had chosen a very queer place to say her prayers, and on the way home asked her why she had knelt there by the stream. So Bernadette told them, and she also told her mother when she got home. Her mother said she was never again to go to the spot. However, the next Sunday she gave in, and Bernadette, with a troop of little friends, arrived again before the grotto. Her friends had brought a bottle of holy water, telling her to throw some of it on the Lady if she appeared again; for if she was only a delusion leading Bernadette astray, this would drive her away. They began to say the rosary. At once Bernadette's face was lit up with joy—she was seeing her mysterious Lady, they knew. They thrust the bottle into her hand. She threw some water up towards the vision several times, but our Lady only smiled, and bent down towards her. "Don't you see her?" cried Bernadette. "Look, look how beautiful she is!" And falling on her knees she began to recite her rosary, her face radiant.

The children were rather frightened, and told the story in the village. So, a few days later, two good women

came to take Bernadette to the grotto. They brought paper and pen, and told Bernadette to ask the Lady to write down who she was and what she wanted. Bernadette did so, but again the Lady smiled, answering that it was not necessary to write down what she had to say, but that Bernadette must come there every day for a fortnight. Bernadette said she would, and asked if her companions might come too. "They may come, and others as well," answered the Lady; **"I wish to see great numbers here."**

The women's story soon spread through the neighbourhood, and when Bernadette, this time accompanied by her father and mother, arrived at the grotto there were a hundred people there already. The next day there were four or five hundred, and the day following several thousand! The civil authorities threatened Bernadette's parents, and would have arrested Bernadette, had not the parish priest intervened. Barricades were put up to keep the people away, but during the night the men of Lourdes took them down. At last the authorities sent troops and gendarmes, who surrounded the spot night and day, but still crowds came—though no one ever saw anything except a poor little peasant girl praying in ecstasy. Those who saw her face, however, never forgot it.

In obedience to our Lady, Bernadette went to the priest, telling him that the Lady of the grotto wished a sanctuary to be built there, and people to come in procession. The priest told her to ask the Lady for a sign—that the rose-tree might bloom. But the Lady answered, **"You must pray for sinners—penance, penance, penance!"**

The next day the Lady told Bernadette to drink and wash herself at the spring, and eat some of the little plant growing there. But there was no spring visible, and there never had been one. Bernadette turned towards the little River Gave, but the Lady pointed to a corner of the grotto. The people watching were surprised to see Bernadette (who was kneeling in the grotto, as she did, now) begin to scrape a hole with her hands in the loose earth and sand. As she scraped, the hole began to fill

with water; but it was quite muddy. Three times Bernadette took up some to drink it, but seemed as if she could not face swallowing such dirty water. However, after looking up at the niche again, she drank some, and washed her face in it. Then she ate some leaves from the little plant growing near by. Soon the water began to trickle in a tiny stream, and by the next day there was a spring of clear water flowing out of the grotto, which has remained ever since.

The next day the first miracle happened. A stone-cutter who had lost one of his eyes in an explosion sent his little girl for some of the water, saying, "If it is the Blessed Virgin, she can cure me if she likes". And so she did—to the utter astonishment of the doctor, who told the man he had an organic injury which made his eye incurable, and would not believe until he had tested the sight of the eye so miraculously cured.

Bernadette used to hold a lighted candle in her hand while she prayed in the grotto, and leave it burning there when she went away. Several times more our Lady spoke of the sanctuary to be built there; and of penance, and praying for sinners.

And so the last day of the fortnight came. Thousands were present, and police with drawn swords had to keep a way clear for Bernadette. As usual, she saw her beautiful Lady, drank of the water, kissed the ground, and went quietly home.

That evening a little baby boy, on the point of death, was brought by his mother to the grotto. She held him in the icy water of the spring for a quarter of an hour. The people thought her mad. But the little boy was saved, his disease cured, and the next day he was crawling about as happy and healthy as he could be.

For nearly three weeks our Lady did not appear, though Bernadette continued to go daily to the grotto. Then on the Feast of the Annunciation she appeared again. Bernadette begged her three times to say who she was. At first she only smiled, but at last she replied, **"I am the Immaculate Conception".** Bernadette did not know

what the words meant, but all the way along the road she kept repeating them, lest she should forget. When she told them to the priest, he knew well it meant that Bernadette's Lady was indeed the Blessed Mother of God.

Our Lady next appeared on the Wednesday after Easter. This time the crowd beheld a strange miracle. Bernadette had propped up her lighted candle in the grotto. As she prayed in ecstasy she lowered her folded hands until they were in the flame of the candle, and it burned up through and above them. "She is burning herself!" cried the crowd. But Bernadette did not move. A doctor present took out his watch and counted the minutes. For more than a quarter of an hour the candle continued to burn through her fingers. When she arose the doctor examined her hands, but they were not scorched, nor even blackened by the flame.

For the eighteenth and last time our Lady appeared to Bernadette on the Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel. Bernadette was almost alone this time, and kneeling on the opposite side of the river; for the civil authorities had forbidden approach to the grotto, and barred the way. Our Lady appeared more beautiful than ever, and the radiance about her more bright and shining.

It was three years before the Bishop, who took up the matter, declared that the faithful might believe the Mother of God had indeed appeared to Bernadette; but long before that time the wonderful story had spread throughout Christendom, and Lourdes had already become a place of pilgrimage.

CATHOLICS IN THE HEBRIDES

Few people know that there are some islands of Great Britain that have never lost the Faith, and where all the people are Catholics. These are in the Outer Hebrides, right out in the Atlantic off the north-west coast of Scotland. On one of the islands—Eriskay—there is not a single non-Catholic, and on the others there are only a very few.

The Faith was first taken to the Hebrides by St. Columba's monks from Iona (see page 26). Their monasteries spread even as far as the Orkneys. But later on all these islands were conquered by the Norsemen, and for some hundreds of years belonged to Norway. But they got back the Faith again about 1090, when St. Margaret and King Malcolm sent missionaries to convert them (see page 81). Since then the people have always remained faithful; and besides the Faith they have kept many good old customs that our civilisation has destroyed.

For instance, they don't bother much about money, and do a great deal of their trade by barter. In the Hebrides you can buy a four-pound loaf of bread for eight eggs, or a pound of fresh butter for a fat chicken. Two yards of the homespun tweed (made by the women from the raw wool) will buy a sack of meal. The cobbler will be quite pleased to be paid in potatoes, and the landlord will accept feathers or kelp (seaweed ashes) as rent.

Then again, the people have kept their own old language, Gaelic. The younger ones speak English, but never use it unless speaking to someone who does not know Gaelic. Among their few forms of amusement, story-telling holds a place of honour, as it did everywhere in the old days. In the evenings, by the dim glow of a peat fire, the men will sit round making ropes, the women knitting busily, and the children listening with shining eyes, while an old man tells again some story of a hero of long ago.

But there is little time for amusements in the Hebrides. The people are very poor, for the soil is mostly bog and bare rock. They have to work hard to keep from starvation. The children (out of school-time) mind the flocks, and help with the harvest, and take their part in the peat-cutting and kelp-making. Even the quite little ones gather heather-stalks to make brooms and ropes. They have no toys. Most of the people have never seen a tramcar or a motor or a train, nor ever walked down a street or looked at a shop-window. Many have never seen a horse or a tree, for no trees grow on those rocky,

wind-beaten islands. But though they have no comforts or refinements, the people are very courteous and kindly both to strangers and to each other.

Their priests have a hard life. Sometimes a sick-call will take one of them out on a day when everyone else is keeping indoors, for when there is a gale from the north-west it is almost impossible to stand against the wind and rain.

One of the things that stirs the heart of every Highlander and especially of these island-folk, is the sound of the bagpipes. It comes into all the special things that happen in their simple lives—dances, feasts, funerals. To be accompanied home after a party by the piper and a few select friends is the highest honour that can be paid to a visitor.

Of course, there are no grand people on these islands: the fisher-folk are the most well-to-do. But they are all very happy, because they are good and simple and honest, and especially because they love their homes.

THIRD YEAR

(*Age: about 10.*)

THIRD YEAR

Old Testament: Judges, Ruth, Saul, David, Solomon

New Testament: St. John the Baptist; Stories of the Life of Christ

Church History: Stories of the Saints —

- St. Paul
- St. Perpetua
- St. Helena
- St. Cuthbert
- Venerable Bede
- St. Edmund of East Anglia
- St. Antony of Padua
- St. Teresa
- St. Philip Neri
- Blessed Edmund Campion
- St. Vincent de Paul

The Child-Martyrs of Uganda

THIRD YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

1. HOW the Angel of the Lord appeared to a young man called Gideon, and told him that he was to deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites, who had been allowed by God to oppress them seven years as a punishment for their sins (Judg. vi. 11-24). And how Gideon at God's command destroyed the heathen altar his father had built, and rallied the Israelites round him. And to make sure God meant to save Israel by his hand, he asked for two signs (Judg. vi. 24-40).

2. How God refused to save Israel by the great army Gideon had raised, lest the Israelites should think they were saved by their own strength; and how He made Gideon reduce his army to 300; and of the strange way in which the great host of Madian was conquered (Judg. vii. 1-25).

3. How the Angel of the Lord appeared to a man and a woman, and told them they should have a son who was to be specially dedicated to the Lord (Judg. xiii. 1-25). Some wonderful stories told about Samson to show his strength: the slaying of the young lion (Judg. xiv. 5-6); the slaying of a thousand men with an ass's jawbone (Judg. xv. 9-16). How Samson lost his strength when his hair was cut; and how the Philistines put out his eyes and kept him prisoner; and how his strength returned, and he broke the pillars of a great hall and killed 3,000 people in it (Judg. xvi. 15-31).

4. The story of Ruth, and how she remained faithful to Noemi, her mother-in-law, and to the God of Israel (Ruth i.); and how she gleaned in the fields of her kinsman Booz (Ruth ii.); and after awhile he married her, and they had a son who was one of the ancestors of David and of our Lord (Ruth iv. 13-22).

5. How Anna prayed for a son, and when her prayer was answered she "lent him to the Lord" to serve at the shrine (1 Kings i. 1-28; ii. 18-19). How God spoke to the boy Samuel of what He would do in Israel (1 Kings iii. 1-21); and when Samuel was grown up he became the last of the Judges, and led the people for twenty years, himself always holy and just (1 Kings vii. 3-15).

6. How the Israelites asked for a King to be chosen and appointed over them (1 Kings viii. 1-22). How God sent Saul to Samuel, and he was anointed King, and afterwards chosen by lot, and given to the people (1 Kings ix.; x. 1-25).

7. How Saul rescued the city of Jabes Galaad when it was besieged by the Ammonites (1 Kings xi. 1-15).

8. How Saul displeased the Lord, and Samuel told Saul he should no more be King (1 Kings xv. 10-31, 34-35). How God sent Samuel to seek out the boy David and anoint him (1 Kings xvi. 1-13). How Saul, not knowing this, made David his armourbearer (1 Kings xvi. 14-23).

9. How David slew the giant Goliath with a stone and a sling (1 Kings xvii. 1-58).

10. How David and Jonathan became very great friends, but Saul was jealous of David (1 Kings xviii. 1-16; xix. 1-18). How David, for fear of Saul, fled and hid in a cave, and was joined by 400 men of his tribe, and Saul, in jealous rage, killed the priests who had helped him, and also many of his family (1 Kings xxii. 1-23). And how David fled and hid in the mountains, and how he spared Saul's life when Saul fell asleep in the very cave where David was hiding (1 Kings xxiv. 1-23).

11. How David spared the life of Saul a second time (1 Kings xxvi. 1-25), and after again making peace with David, Saul returned to his old enmity. How, in a battle with the Philistines, Saul was wounded; and lest he should be slain by the Philistines, fell upon his own sword, and died (1 Kings xxxi.). And how David lamented Saul and Jonathan (2 Kings i.).

12. How, after seven years of war with Saul's followers,

David was made King of all Israel, and Jerusalem became "the city of David" (2 Kings v. 1-12); he gained victories over the Philistines (2 Kings v. 17-25), and he brought the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem (2 Kings vi. 2-3, 10-15) and wanted to build a house for it, but the Lord sent him word that he should not do this, but that it should be built by his son, Solomon (2 Kings vii. 1-17). And how David, for the sake of his love for Jonathan, made inquiries about Saul's kindred, and was kind to Miphiboseth (2 Kings ix. 1-13).

13. Of David's great sin (2 Kings xi. 1-3, 6-27), and how the prophet Nathan rebuked him (2 Kings xii. 1-14).

14. How Absalom raised a revolt against the King, his father, through personal ambition for power, and David had to flee from Jerusalem (2 Kings xv. 1-30). But after a great battle between the followers of David and the rebel Israelites, Absalom met his death, being stabbed by Joab, as he hung by his hair in a tree. And how David mourned for Absalom his son (2 Kings xviii. 1 33). And how, after returning to Jerusalem and reigning a few years more, David, being old, died and was buried in his city, and Solomon reigned in his stead (3 Kings ii. 10-12).

15. How God said to Solomon, "Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee". And Solomon asked for an understanding heart. So God gave him what he asked, and added all the things he might have asked for—riches, glory, and a long life (3 Kings iii. 1-15). How Solomon showed his wisdom in judging between the two women who came to him with a dead baby (3 Kings iii. 16-28).

16. Of Solomon's great riches and wisdom, and the peace that Israel enjoyed under him (3 Kings iv. 21-34). How Solomon built the Temple, and the Lord promised to dwell in it (3 Kings v., vi.). And how the Ark of the Lord was placed in the Holy of Holies, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Temple with Glory (3 Kings viii. 1-14). And how the Lord appeared to Solomon, and promised that if he was faithful and did not worship any false gods, the peace and glory of Israel should continue

(3 Kings ix. 1-9). But Solomon did not remain faithful to the Lord, and so after his death the kingdom was divided, and great tribulations came again upon Israel (3 Kings xi. 1-13).

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES

St. John the Baptist.

1. How an Angel told Zachary he should have a son who should be great before the Lord (Luke i. 5-23). And how St. John was born, and his father sang the *Benedistus* about him (Luke i. 57-80).

2. How St. John preached in the desert (Matt. iii. 1-12; and Luke iii. 1-18). And how our Lord came to him to be baptised (Matt. iii. 13-17). And how he pointed out our Lord to his disciples, saying He was the Lamb of God (John i. 29 and 35-37).

3. How John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod (Matt. xiv. 1-12). And of our Lord's testimony that he was the greatest prophet (Luke vii. 24-28).

4. Christ the Good Shepherd, leading His own sheep (John x. 1-14), and going out to seek the lost sheep (Luke xv. 4-7).

5. How Jesus healed a man who had been paralysed thirty-eight years (John v. 1-15).

6. Of Martha and Mary, who were friends of Jesus (Luke x. 38-42). How they made Him a supper the last time He visited them before His death, and Mary anointed Him (John xii. 1-8).

7. How Jesus raised Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, to life when he had been in the grave four days (John xi. 1-45).

8. A story Jesus told about some wise and foolish virgins, to show how we must be ready all the time in case He should come (Matt. xxv. 1-13).

9. The story of three men who each had his chance, and how two did well, and one was foolish and lazy, and so failed (Matt. xxv. 14-30).

10. The story of a man who made a supper, but as his friends would not come, he asked the poor, and people from the highways and hedges, instead (Luke xiv. 16-24).

11. How Jesus healed ten men that were lepers (Luke xvii. 12-19).

12. How our Lord ate the Last Supper with His disciples, and afterwards gave them their First Communion (Luke xxii. 1-20).

13. Of our Lord's agony in the Garden (Matt. xxvi. 37-56).

14. Of our Lord's three trials :—Before Caiaphas (Matt. xxvi. 57-68); before Herod (Luke xxiii. 1-12); before Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 11-31; and John xviii. 28-40 and xix. 1-16).

15. The road to Calvary (John xix. 17; Luke xxiii. 26-31; Matt. xxvii. 33, 34).

THE SAINTS

ST. PAUL

(The following is a brief skeleton outline of St. Paul's life, not meant to be passed on, as it is, to the children, but intended to help teachers to fit the stories from the Acts into their proper places.)

St. Paul was born at Tarsus, in Cilicia. His father was a Roman citizen; also a pious Jew, very exact in the observances of Pharisaism. St. Jerome tells us his parents came from a small town of Galilee. They were of the tribe of Benjamin. St. Paul possessed two names on account of being both a Jew and a Roman. Saul was his Jewish name, and Paul the Roman one, which he used alone later. Every Jewish boy was expected to be proficient in a trade, and Saul learned that of tent-making (Acts xviii. 3). While quite young he was sent to Jerusalem to receive his education at the school of Gamaliel, a Jewish scholar (Acts xxii. 3). Possibly his family resided in the city, as later mention is made of one of his sisters living in Jerusalem. At the time of Stephen's martyrdom, at which he assisted, he is called a "young" man, but this term might mean anything up to forty. His conversion was quite sudden—the work of grace (aided by the example of St. Stephen), and our Lord really appeared to him (as actually as to Peter and the others, after the Resurrection) (1 Cor. xv. 5-8; ix. 1).

He began to preach in Damascus directly after his baptism (Acts ix. 20). Then he went to Arabia, probably not on a missionary journey, but to seek time and solitude for prayer and meditation on his new life in Christ (Gal. i. 17). He returned to Damascus, but was forced to flee from the Jews. (About three years had elapsed.) He went to Jerusalem to see Peter, but only stayed fifteen

days (Gal. i. 18). He left for Tarsus, his native place (Gal. i. 21), and is lost sight of for five or six years. Barnabas then went to Tarsus in search of him, and brought him to Antioch, where for a year they worked together (Acts xi. 25-30), and their numerous converts first received the name of "Christians". They were then sent together to carry alms to the brethren at Jerusalem, where there was a famine (Acts xi. 27-30). They returned to Antioch (Acts xii. 25). Here the Holy Ghost made known to the Church that Paul and Barnabas were to set forth on missionary journeys (Acts xiii. 1-3).

Now began the great journeys of St. Paul. Later the children will study these with maps, and learn their proper geographical and chronological order. For the present it is enough that the *stories* which give vivid pictures of St. Paul at various places should make him a real person to them, and give some idea of the spread of the Church, and its condition in the pagan lands and cities. It is not always remembered that many years elapsed between St. Paul's conversion and the time when the Holy Ghost at last sent him forth on his real apostolate to the Gentiles. Very different to the call and work of the Twelve. Even so was the manner of his preaching different to theirs. They were "witnesses" of Christ visibly present, ministering, crucified, risen. St. Paul is more a witness of *Christ within,* self crucified with Christ, the glorious and certain *hope* of eternal life and the Resurrection. St. Paul was getting to know Christ during all those years of his "hidden life".

1. How God raised up the great "Apostle of the Gentiles". Saul's parentage, etc.; martyrdom of Stephen; persecution of the Churches; Saul's conversion; baptism; years of preparation; beginning of his ministry. (See the above outline; and Acts vii. 58, 59; viii. 3; ix. 1-30; xi. 25-30.)

2. St. Paul is sent by the Holy Ghost on his first great missionary journey (Acts xiii. 1-3). How at Lystra St. Paul healed a cripple, and the people thought he and Barnabas were the Greek gods Jupiter and Mercury, and

brought out oxen wreathed with garlands to offer sacrifice to them (Acts xiv. 6-17). How St. Paul was stoned at Lystra; but afterwards returned boldly into the city, and travelling back the way he had come, ordained priests in all the churches, and reached Antioch again safely (Acts xiv. 17-27).

3. *St. Paul's Second Journey.*—How he cast out an evil spirit from a slave girl, and her master seized him and his companions and had them cast into prison. And how God saved them by an earthquake and they ended in converting their gaoler (Acts xvi. 16-40).

4. *St. Paul's Third Journey.*—How he came to Ephesus, and found some men who believed in Christ, but had only received the baptism of John the Baptist, and said they had not so much as heard that there was the Holy Ghost (Acts xix. 1-8). How the silversmiths raised a great riot in the city against St. Paul, because by converting so many pagans to Christ he had harmed their trade in silver idols of Diana (Acts xix. 23-40).

5. How on his journey back to Jerusalem St. Paul stopped at Troas, and preached a very long sermon that lasted till midnight; and a young man fell asleep during the sermon, and fell out of the window three storeys up. But St. Paul restored him to life (Acts xx. 6-12).

And how at Caesarea a man prophesied that Paul would be bound at Jerusalem, which made the Christians beg him with tears not to go there. But St. Paul rebuked them, saying he was ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xxi. 8-17).

6. How St. Paul was mobbed in Jerusalem, and was only saved by being carried off by the soldiers, and they, finding he was a Roman citizen, allowed him to stand on the steps of the castle and speak to the people (Acts xxi. 27-40).

And how, after he had told them all his history, they wanted to stone him because he said the Holy Ghost had commanded him to preach to the Gentiles. And how he only escaped being scourged and tortured by the tribune

by explaining he was a freeborn Roman citizen (Acts xxii. 22-30).

7. How Paul was set before the High Priest, and in the dissension that followed would have been torn in pieces, had not the soldiers again saved him. How forty men made a great plot and would have killed him, had not his nephew warned the tribune. How the tribune sent St. Paul by night, with an escort of 470 armed men, to Felix, the Governor (Acts xxii. 30; xxiii. 1-35), who kept him in prison two years (Acts xxiv. 27).

8. How Paul, having appealed to Caesar, was sent to Rome to be judged (as our Lord had come and told him: Acts xxiii. 11); but on the way the ship was wrecked, and its crew and prisoners thrown upon an island, where St. Paul had a strange adventure with a poisonous snake, and did many miracles (Acts xxvii.; xxviii. 1-11).

9. How St. Paul reached Rome, and (though kept a prisoner) was allowed to live in his own hired lodgings and receive the Jews and preach to them (Acts xxviii. 12-31). After two years his trial came on, and he was set at liberty; but before long was captured again, and thrown into prison in Rome. From there he wrote to the most beloved of his disciples, Timothy, that his martyrdom was near (2 Tim. iv. 6-8). St. Paul, with St. Peter, was martyred on June 29, probably in the year 67 (in the reign of Nero). The **tomb of the Apostles** at Rome has been the chief place of pilgrimage in Christendom ever since.

Feast.—With St. Peter on June 29; and also June 30 (Conversion: January 25).

Emblem.—Holding book and sword.

ST. PERPETUA (203)

St. Perpetua, the young Christian wife of a pagan, and mother of a tiny baby, was brought before the Roman Procurator at Carthage, and told to offer incense to the gods and she would be set free. She was firm, and refused to do anything that would be unfaithful to Christ

and His Church. Her old father pushed his way through the crowd and came to her, begging her, out of pity for his old age and for her little child, to offer the incense as she was bidden, and so find herself free to come home. The tears ran down his face, and the pagan crowd was moved to pity. But still Perpetua remained strong in Christ, though her heart was nearly breaking. She was thrown back to prison with some other faithful Christians. While there her little child was brought and placed in her arms, to her great joy; and she said the prison was no longer a place of horror, but had become like a palace. Then they told her to renounce Christ, and she might go free with her child; otherwise he must be taken from her, and left motherless in the cruel world, while she would be thrown to wild beasts. But she knew that Christ must come first, and she let them take her baby from her. At the military games on the Emperor's birthday, St. Perpetua, the slave St. Felicitas, another slave named Revocatus, and two other Christians, were thrown to the wild beasts. After being gored by a wild cow they were still alive, and able to give each other the kiss of peace. The executioner was sent to complete their martyrdom. As he stood over the beautiful young mother who had already moved the pagans to pity, he trembled, and almost turned away. But Perpetua smiled, saying, "You are more afraid than I!" and bade him do his duty. And so these five brave followers of Christ won their martyr's crown.

Feast.—March 7.

Emblem.—With a wild cow by her side; ladder guarded by dragon.

ST. HELENA (328)

St. Helena, born in a humble state of life, being an innkeeper's daughter, was the wife of the Emperor of Rome, and became the mother of the famous Emperor Constantine. But after being a faithful wife always, she was abandoned by the Emperor and left in sorrow and loneliness. When Constantine came to power he had his

mother brought to Court and treated with great honour; and when he himself became a believer in Christ and a protector of the Church, Helena, too, became a zealous Christian.

She was filled with desire to visit the Holy Places, made sacred by our Lord's life on earth. So her son sent her out to arrange for the building of churches on the sacred spots. St. Helena built churches—one at Bethlehem, near the grotto shown as the birthplace of Christ, and the other on the Mount of the Ascension, and also the one known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

She lived for many years in Jerusalem, working among the poor and showing them the greatest charity.

It was during the reign of Constantine that the True Cross was discovered, and tradition tells us that it was St. Helena who found it. Here is the story of the finding:

St. Helena knew the exact spot on which the Crucifixion took place, because the pagans, after ploughing up the hill and defacing it in every way they could (to prevent the pilgrims who from earliest times came to venerate the spot), had built a temple of Venus upon it. She also knew that it was the custom to bury the crosses on which criminals had been executed, near the place of their death, without loss of time. She therefore set her men to dig, and they finally came on three crosses buried together, and also the nails and the title of our Lord's Cross. There was nothing, however, to show which of the three was the Cross of Christ. So the Bishop of Jerusalem suggested that perhaps God would reveal it by a miracle. The three crosses were applied in turn to the body of a dying woman, and as the third touched her, she rose up, cured. St. Helena did much for the Faith, especially in the building of churches, for now that the persecutions were over the Christians needed to have public buildings of their own.

Feast.—August 18.

Emblem.—Crowned, holding a book and supporting a large cross.

ST. CUTHBERT (687)

Boyhood.

St. Cuthbert was an orphan, brought up by a poor widow, and spent his time minding sheep. Before he was twelve he was noted for his swiftness of foot, his skill with his sling, and his powers in fighting and wrestling. Many a time he saved his flock from wild beasts, already a "good shepherd" to the actual lambs as he was later on to the lambs of Christ. But though so daring and active, he was also full of gentle charity, and loved God above all things. Out on the hillsides he prayed, and often longed to throw all this energy and courage of his heart into God's cause. A vision of St. Aidan's soul borne to heaven by Angels urged him to a yet greater longing to lead the perfect life. When a young man he presented himself at the great door of the Abbey of Melrose, and asked to be made a soldier of God.

Monk.

Cuthbert proved as good a monk as he had been a shepherd, and as skilful in studying the Scriptures as he had been in slinging and running. Also he wrestled with himself as successfully as he had done with the shepherd lads on the mountain-side, and his Abbot soon saw that here was a young monk who could be trusted more than most. Taking him to the new Monastery of Ripon, he gave him the duty of entertaining strangers—a thing only given, as a rule, to old and tried monks to do. But Cuthbert knew how to prevent this being any distraction or temptation to him: he served the guests and washed their feet as if each were Christ our Lord.

Preacher.

Having returned to Melrose (where he was made Prior), he started the great task of preaching to the semi-barbarous Saxons, and travelling from village to village, along rough tracks and through woods full of wild beasts. The

people still practised heathen customs, and there were very few churches as yet. When St. Cuthbert appeared in a place, the people flocked round him to hear his words. He not only instructed them, but spoke so persuasively and movingly, and with a face so like an Angel's in its shining beauty, that even the most hardened would come and confess their sins and ask for absolution. He would go far across the wild, craggy mountains to seek out the rough and ignorant shepherd folk, and gather them into the fold of Christ; and wherever he went and whatever he did, his thoughts were always with God, and people said that just to see him pass by stirred them to live better lives. After having been removed from Melrose to the bigger Abbey of Lindisfarne, and governed there as Prior for several years, he got leave from his Abbot to fulfil his heart's desire, and lead a hermit's life, where he could pray and commune with God undistracted.

Hermit.

St. Cuthbert now took up his abode on the little island of Farne, nine miles from Lindisfarne. He built himself a small cell, and lived on barley which he had sowed. Many people came to the island to consult him, and get comfort and inspiration. For these visitors he built a house on his little island. Later he never left his cell, and spoke through his window to those who came to him. His friends were the wild animals of the island and sea-birds. Even to this day there is a kind of bird found there which is wonderfully tame. These still go by the name of the Birds of St. Cuthbert. This time of solitude, when he could give all his thoughts to God, was very precious to the holy monk, and God filled him with much grace, so that he had the power to perform miracles, and came to be called the Thaumaturgus or Wonder-worker of Britain. But this time away from the world was only, as it were, a little holiday for his soul—a time of preparation, though he knew it not, for greater activity and many worldly cares and trials.

Bishop.

One day, after eight years had passed, the King of Northumbria, accompanied by a Bishop and a great train, arrived in boats at the island. They had come to beg St. Cuthbert on their knees to accept the honour of being consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne. He had refused all their former messages; but now he could hold out no longer, and with tears promised he would take on the charge. After spending one more winter in his beloved island, he was consecrated by the Archbishop of York and entered on his new life.

He still followed his hard rule, praying, watching, fasting, but now adding to it constant work, as he went from place to place preaching, inspiring and encouraging his clergy, and always giving especial care to the poor. He always seemed full of serene joy, whatever he had to bear of weariness, pain, anxiety. But the strain was telling on him, and after two years he returned to Farne Island to die.

The Death of St. Cuthbert.

St. Cuthbert's illness was long and painful, and the monks from Lindisfarne visited him constantly. Especially one named Herbert, who seems to have been a companion of his labours in the world, and loved him very much. One evening, as Herbert watched by his master's bed, St. Cuthbert signed to be raised up and supported. "My brother," he said, "thou must ask me now all that thou seekest to know from me, for to-morrow it will not be possible." The monk's head sank down against the body of the dying Saint. "I pray thee, leave me not behind," he said. "Pray God that, as we have served Him together in this world, we may pass together into His glory." In silence they prayed for a while, the monk's tears running down his face. Presently St. Cuthbert said, "Rise, my brother, and weep no more. God has granted us that which we have asked from Him."

And so, at dawn of day, surrounded by a band of monks

who had come to sing the Office in his cell, St. Cuthbert's brave and loving soul soared up to God as free as the sea-birds he loved so well; and at the same moment the monk Herbert died. Sadly the monks raised two flaming torches on the shore, that their brothers at Lindisfarne, watching across the chill grey sea in the dawn, might pray for the soul of their beloved Father.

The simple people of the North had loved St. Cuthbert as few men have been loved by their countrymen. And after his death century after century the devotion to him continued, and his name is still great to this day.

Feast.—March 20.

Emblem.—Bearing head of St. Oswald, with swans.

THE VENERABLE BEDE (673-735)

St. Bede was a monk, simple, humble, learned, and holy, described in the Church's Office as " ever reading, writing, teaching, or praying " ; but in this round of daily tasks, in the hidden life of his monastery among the woods of half-barbarous Saxon England, he became not only a Saint, but so learned and full of spiritual wisdom, that he has been given the title of Doctor of the Church. In those days it was possible for one man to know all the learning that was available, and St. Bede was master of all the sciences and arts of his day.

His Life.

Practically all we know of his life is the little account which he places at the end of his great book, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People.* There he says that he was a monk of St. Peter and Paul, at Wearmouth and Jarrow, in Northumberland; that he was born in the territory of this monastery, and was placed in the hands of St. Benet Biscop to be educated, at the age of seven. From that time he lived in the monastery, studying Scripture, writing, and singing in the church. At nineteen he was ordained deacon, and at thirty priest, by

St. John of Beverley. He then gives a list of his works, and ends with the following beautiful prayer:

"And I beseech Thee, O good Jesus, that since Thou hast lovingly given unto me to drink in with delight the words of Thy wisdom, Thou wilt also grant me to attain to Thee, the fountain-head of all wisdom, and to stand for ever before Thy face."

A Little Story told by Alcuin.

That is all St. Bede has to tell us about himself; but Alcuin (tutor in the household of the great Charlemagne), an Englishman born at York the year St. Bede died, has several passages that tell us a little more of the holy English doctor. In a letter he calls him "the most illustrious master of our age", who "in his youth had that great love of learning for which now he is honoured among men, and has received great glory and reward with God". In another place he tells a charming little story showing the childlike simplicity of the great scholar. "Our master and your patron, the blessed Bede," writes Alcuin, "is reported to have said, 'I know that Angels come to the canonical hours and to the assemblies of the brethren. What if they did not find me among my brothers? Would they not have reason to say, "Where is Bede? Why does he not come with the brethren to the appointed services?"'"

St. Bede's Death.

Here is the beautiful little story of St. Bede's death told in the words of Cuthbert, one of his brother monks (Cardinal Newman's translation).

"In those days, besides our lectures and the Psalmody, he was engaged in two works: he was translating into English the Gospel of St. John, and some extracts from the *Notae* of Isidore. On the Tuesday before Ascension Day he began to suffer still more in his breathing, and his feet were slightly swollen. However, he went through the day dictating cheerfully, and he kept saying from time to time, 'Take down what I say quickly, for I know not

how long I am to last, or whether my Maker will not take me soon'. He seemed to us to be quite aware of the time of his going, and he passed that night in giving thanks without sleeping. As soon as morning broke, that is on the Wednesday, he urged us to make haste with the writing which we had begun. We did so till nine o'clock, when we walked in procession with the relics of the Saints, according to the usage of that day. But one of our party said to him, 'Dearest Master, one chapter is still wanting —can you bear our asking you about it?' He answered, 'I can bear it; take your pen and be ready to write quickly'. At three o'clock he said to me, 'Run fast and call your priests, that I may divide among them some little gifts that I have in my box'. When I had done this in much agitation, he spoke to each, urging and entreating them all to make a point of saying Masses and prayers for him. Thus he passed the day in joy until evening, when the above-named youth said to him, 'Dear Master, there is yet one sentence not written'; he answered, 'Write quickly'. Presently the youth said, 'Now it is finished'; he replied, 'Good, thou hast said the truth; *consummatum est;* take my head into thy hands, for it is very pleasant for me to sit facing my old praying-place and thus to call upon my Father'. And so on the floor of his cell he sang, 'Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost', and just as he said 'Holy Ghost' he breathed his last, and went to the realms above."

Feast.—May 27.

Emblem.—As a monk, holding pen, inkhorn and book.

ST. EDMUND OF EAST ANGLIA (814-870)

The Young King.

St. Edmund came to the throne of East Anglia when only a boy of fifteen. He was brave, noble-minded, and full of the love of God. He undertook the difficult task of reigning over East Anglia, trusting in God's aid. The surrounding kingdoms were being ravaged by the Danes.

St. Edmund knew that sooner or later his kingdom would share the same fate, and he set himself to prepare to resist; for many of his people were Christians, and he knew that under Danish rule the Faith would soon be stamped out. He won the loyal devotion of his people, and especially of his soldiers, by showing himself the friend of the poor, and by carrying out true justice, so that all who had any complaint came to him and were sure of receiving fair judgment. He also fortified his kingdom by throwing up an enormous earthwork, reaching from Newmarket to the Fen Country, and known as Edmund's Dyke down to the time of the Reformation. (It may still be seen.) He kept a large army well trained, and scouts posted on all his frontiers. For many years his kingdom enjoyed peace, and Christianity and civilisation spread more and more among the wild people of his realm.

The Danes Resisted.

But at last the day came when his outposts came running in to report that the fierce, cruel Danes were collecting in vast hordes on the frontiers. Edmund rallied his forces and got ready to resist to the utmost.

The Danes began pouring into East Anglia, burning churches and monasteries, sacking towns, murdering the people. But Edmund gave them no peace. Battle after battle was fought, the Danes suffering such loss that at last they sued for peace, and marched out of the kingdom.

Treachery and Betrayal.

For some time there was peace, during which a strange thing happened. One day a boat was driven ashore, and found to contain Lothparch, the leader of the Danes who had fought so fiercely against the Saxons. St. Edmund, in obedience to our Lord's command, "Love your enemies", treated the helpless Dane thus thrown upon his mercy with all kindness, keeping him as an honoured guest at his royal castle. The King's vassals accepted their lord's decision, admiring his Christian charity; but among them there was one man, Berne the huntsman,

whose jealousy was so bitter that he seized his chance and slew Lothparch. For his punishment he was put in an open boat and abandoned to the waves. He was finally washed upon the coast of Denmark; and to revenge himself on the King, went to Inguar and Hubba, the sons of Lothparch, and told them their father had fallen into the hands of King Edmund, who had cruelly murdered him. The two Danish leaders were filled with rage and intense hatred of Edmund, and at once collecting a vast army, landed once again on the English coast and marched into East Anglia, determined to wreak their revenge on King Edmund himself.

"Greater Love Than This No Man Hath."

Once again Edmund and his men resisted with all their power; and at length a great pitched battle took place on Thetford Heath. By nightfall the Danes had fallen back; but Edmund, standing sadly looking over the bloody battlefield in the moonlight, saw that his army lay before him, a great host of dead men. When, the next day, news came that a reinforcement of 10,000 men had joined the Danes, he knew that there was no hope of turning the invaders out of his realm by force of arms. He knew that it was he himself Inguar and Hubba hated, and he felt certain that if they once had him in their power and could wreak their revenge upon him, they would leave his realm in peace. He determined, like the Christ whom he worshipped, to let himself be taken, since it was "expedient that one man should die, and the whole nation perish not". Great was the sorrow when he made known his decision; all, from his spiritual Father the holy Bishop St. Humbart, down to his weary and war-worn soldiers, begged him to fly and take refuge from his enemies.

But Edmund was firm in his brave resolve. He gave orders that his castle should be left unguarded, the gates thrown open, the defences removed. He then went to the chapel, and laying down his sword, he knelt and awaited his enemies, accepting like Christ in Gethsemane the bitter chalice that he must drink, and praying for

strength to bear the suffering. By his side knelt the aged Bishop, who dearly loved the King whom he had brought up from childhood.

Martyrdom.

At length through the silence came the sound of the wild Danes rushing through the castle in search of King Edmund. Suddenly the chapel door burst open; the Danes' fierce oaths rang through the silence, and they pressed into the sanctuary, seized Edmund and dragged him forth. Tying him to a tree, they scourged him with long whips, but no cry broke from him, save now and then the Holy Name. They taunted him with his faith in Christ, bidding him renounce a God who could forsake him thus. Then, taking their bows, they shot at him until arrows were sticking into every part of his body. Inguar, the while, stood by jeering at his victim. Seeing that nothing could break his spirit or make him give up his God, he drew his sword and smote off the head of the brave and faithful martyr.

St. Edmund had not suffered in vain; the Danes, having revenged themselves, departed and left East Anglia in peace.

Feast.—November 20.

Emblem.—Pierced with arrows; kneeling, holding up quiver of arrows to heaven; wolf guarding his body.

ST. ANTONY OF PADUA (1231)

Everyone knows the statues of St. Antony of Padua, a noble and learned man who became a friar in the days of St. Francis. Here is the story of why he is shown with the Divine Child seated on his book:

On one of his journeys he stayed a night at an inn. He excused himself after supper and left the other guests keeping good cheer together. The landlord chancing to go upstairs and past St. Antony's door, noticed that beneath it and through the crannies could be seen a bril-

liant light. He knew it could not come from any of his little lamps or tapers, and filled with curiosity, he put his eye to the keyhole. He saw that the room was flooded with a miraculous radiance. And there stood St. Antony, his gentle face full of tenderness, while on his open book was seated the Divine Child, speaking to him and caressing him. St. Antony, knowing that his host had spied on him, made him promise never to tell what he had seen as long as he (St. Antony) should live.

Here is the story of why we pray to St. Antony to help us find lost things: St. Antony had a book he greatly valued. One day a young servant stole it and made off. When St. Antony discovered the loss he showed little concern, and would not allow his companions to worry over it. He just prayed. He was still praying when the servant came rushing in and threw himself at the Saint's feet, confessing his theft, and giving him back the book. He explained that he had reached a river and was about to ford it when the devil appeared to him, and he was so terrified that he turned back and did not stop running until he reached St. Antony.

The people of Padua loved St. Antony as few Saints have been loved. The crowds of people that followed his bier were vast. A great candle was made to be set up at his shrine. It was so heavy that it took sixteen men to carry it to the church; and many of the other candles brought were too big to be lighted in the church, and had to burn out in the courtyard.

St. Anthony was one of the most humble of Saints; he thought nothing of himself, and tried to live a hidden life in a little mountain friary, washing dishes for his brethren. But God made him known, and His power working through St. Antony was so wonderful that the humble friar came to be known as "The Wonder-worker", and is now shown devotion in almost every Catholic church.

Feast.—June 13.

Emblem.—Holy Infant on a book.

ST. TERESA (1515-1582)

St. Teresa was the daughter of a Spanish nobleman, beautiful, clever, and full of friendliness and charm. She felt God was calling her to be a nun, and though it cost her a lot, she entered the Convent of the Incarnation. Here, after many years which were very trying, and in which she did her best to please God, she received a call to reform the Carmelite Order and found poor, simple little convents where the primitive Rule shoud truly be observed. She spent the rest of her life doing this, not only for the nuns, but for the friars (helped by St. John of the Cross). Here are a few little stories which help us to understand this great Saint, who, though she received such marvellous gifts from God in the way of prayer, ecstasies and visions, and spiritual understanding, was also very human, and full of humour and ordinary common-sense :

How St. Teresa Twice Ran Away from Home to Serve God.

Both times it was with one of her brothers. The first time they were tiny children, and thinking how nice it would be to be martyrs and go straight to our Lord, they set out in the very early morning to go to the land of the Moors, who would be sure to cut off their heads. But they only reached the gates of the city, for an uncle found the runaway pair, and took them home to their anxious mother.

The second time was a good many years later. St. Teresa had lost her mother, and grown up among a crowd of elder brothers who spoilt their brilliant little sister. The companionship of gay and worldly young cousins had made her forget her early piety and longing to give herself to God, and she cared more for fine clothes and romances and admiration than for the serious things of life. But a visit to an uncle, a saintly old man, helped to bring her thoughts back to God. As she sat in the old Spanish garden, read-

ing aloud to him from the Fathers, what had at first seemed a dull duty became full of absorbing interest. She had long talks with him, and a few months later (after a hard struggle with herself) decided to be a nun. Her father would not give his consent. So, for the second time in her life, she and one of her brothers got up in the early hours, crept out of the house and ran away from home. St. Teresa was received into the Convent of the Incarnation, and her brother into a Dominican convent near by. Her father came to see her, and finding her heart was really set on serving God in this way, gave his consent, and began himself to serve God by a life of prayer.

How the Idea of Founding a Convent of the Primitive Rule came to St. Teresa.

On the Feast of Mount Carmel St. Teresa had gone to her cell for a little quiet prayer, after a day that had been all rush and bustle and visitors crowding in and out of the convent (for in those days Carmelite nuns were not very different from pious ladies living in the world, and were allowed to go out on long visits, and have as many friends as they liked to see them).

A nun who had been an old friend of St. Teresa followed her to her cell, and they were soon joined by two young nuns, and two girls there at school at the convent, nieces of St. Teresa. They talked of the day's happenings, and the young nuns said how distracting it was to have visitors in and out all day. Suddenly one of St. Teresa's nieces spoke—she was a beautiful girl, soon to leave school and set out on a gay life in the world. "Let us," she said, "all of us who are here, go to some other place where we can live a solitary life, like hermits; if we had the courage to do that, we could found a convent." St. Teresa smiled, and asked where the money would come from. "From me", said Maria; "I will give part of my dowry." Then the other girl and the two young nuns got very keen on the idea, and they began describing to each other what the simple little convent would be like. St. Teresa listened to them, thinking how what they were saying was just what

she had been thinking herself, not long before; they were describing the poor little convent of her dreams. (For the flow of visitors had long been a great trial to her: for fourteen years she had struggled against the temptation to have worldly friends; and now for six years our Lord had been appearing to her in visions, and she longed to live a more perfect life for Him, and help others to also.)

The next day St. Teresa had to see a young widow whom she was helping spiritually. She told her of what the girls and young nuns had been saying. To her surprise the young widow—who was rich and rather an important lady in Avila—took the idea quite seriously and said she would help. She went off and obtained leave from the authorities; and St. Teresa prayed and got our Lord's consent and her confessor's approval. And so in time a little house was bought and partly rebuilt, and after many difficulties and adventures and trials and disappointments, at last St. Teresa had the joy of seeing five novices clothed in the rough habit and sandals of the primitive Rule, and take up their abode there under her guidance. A little later Maria, who had suggested the scheme, joined them, and some years after became the Prioress of one of the many convents that were founded by St. Teresa.

The Bishop's Crucifix.

The poor little convent was called St. Joseph's. The nuns divided all their time between prayer and work. They were very happy, and St. Teresa taught them to love poverty (because our Lord was poor) and silence (because the less they talked to people the more they could talk to God); and she showed them the joy of being humble and obedient and unselfish, and brave in little things, even if they were not called to be martyrs. So simple and joyful was the spirit of St. Joseph's, that the holy men who came to see it and speak with St. Teresa were delighted. St. Peter of Alcantara, the Franciscan Saint, was so pleased with its poverty, that he cried, "This is indeed a house of Joseph, a true cave of Bethlehem!"

The Bishop of Avila often came to St. Joseph's. He was

very pleased with the spirit of fervour and simple devotion of the nuns, and the sense of joy in the service of God that filled the place (for one of St. Teresa's little maxims was : " A sad nun is a bad nun ").

One day he brought with him a beautiful big crucifix. St. Teresa asked him if she might show it to the nuns. He said yes, and she took it out to them, and then came back to talk to the Bishop. Presently they heard the sound of singing. Opening the door which led on to the tiny cloister, they found the nuns had formed a little procession, and at the head of it was the youngest novice, carrying the crucifix. They were singing the Litany of the Holy Name. Suddenly St. Teresa was rather dismayed to find that instead of chanting the response, " Have mercy on us ", her daughters were singing, " Stay with us !" The good Bishop took the hint, and left the crucifix at St. Joseph's with the delighted nuns.

How St. Teresa Placed a Statue of our Lady in the Prioress's Stall.

Gradually many convents like St. Joseph's were founded in other towns, not only in Spain but in other countries, and St. Teresa spent her time going from place to place, visiting these convents or founding new ones, settling difficulties, calling on Bishops, writing letters, and doing all the things that made the great work spread. All the nuns and friars of the primitive Rule looked to her as their Mother, and the Superiors counted on her visits. So it was a very great trial both for her and them when the authorities ordered her to leave her new foundations, and go back to the old Convent of the Incarnation, where the nuns lived an easygoing sort of life. She was to be Prioress, and make them keep their Rule more faithfully (though not the primitive Rule). It was very difficult, because the nuns were furious. They were already angry and jealous about St. Teresa. Now they got very excited, and made a plan that, at the first Chapter where St. Teresa would preside as Prioress, they would all declare that they refused to obey her. But St. Teresa thought of a way of

pacifying them. When the angry nuns came into the great room, to their surprise they saw a big statue of our Lady in the Prioress's stall, the keys of office in her hand. On a little stool at our Lady's feet sat St. Teresa. Then she spoke such kind, friendly, and humble words that the hearts of the nuns were softened, and they listened to what she had to say. She explained how she was only going to try and help them to keep their Rule well, and that it was not she but our Lady who really ruled over them. She quite won them, and before long they loved her like her own nuns did, and soon the convent became a happy, busy place, with the spirit of prayer and unselfishness instead of the spirit of the world. The convent still exists, and still our Lady's statue occupies the Prioress's stall.

Of St. Teresa's Courage even in Old Age and Sickness.

All St. Teresa's work, travelling and founding convents, had quite worn her out. She was nearly seventy, and her health was failing, but still she kept on, never giving way. Once, when she had been sent for by one of her new convents that was in great difficulties, her rough cart was held up by the floods. She was burning with fever and unfit to travel; still, she would not give up the journey, and with her two companions waded through the water that covered the roads. It was she, though sick and old, who led the way and cheered on the others. Presently her foot slipped and she was nearly carried away by the floods. "Oh, Lord," she cried, "why do You put such difficulties in our way?" And in her heart she heard Him answer, "Do not complain, My daughter; it is thus I treat My friends". And St. Teresa, with a sad little smile, made answer, "Ah, my Lord, that is why You have so few".

It was often impossible even to get ordinary food on these journeys; and St. Teresa, who was very ill and should have had invalid's food, would content herself with dried figs, telling the nun who served her not to be sad, they were very good figs.

And so at last, on one of these journeys, St. Teresa could work no longer. She was laid on a bed and Holy Viaticum

brought her; and the nuns saw her face shining and beautiful and quite young again. Her room was full of the scent of summer flowers, so that all who came in wondered. And so at last her soul passed out of her tired body, into the joy and rest of the Lord she had loved so much and served so faithfully.

Feast.—October 15.

Emblem.—Holding pen and book; an Angel by her with arrow and heart; flaming heart in her hand.

ST. PHILIP NERI (1515-1595)

"Pippo Buono" was what people called the little Florentine boy who afterwards became St. Philip, and it meant "good Philip". And besides being good in other ways, he was always cheerful and sweet-tempered. As quite a little boy he wanted to suffer for Christ, and when he was ill would make light of it and hide his sufferings, so as to offer them up. We may be sure he loved the beautiful pictures Fra Angelico had painted on the walls of the cells, cloisters, and corridors of San Marco; for it was there that "Pippo Buono" learnt to know and love his religion. Many years later he wrote: "All the good I have ever had from my youth up I owe to your fathers at San Marco at Florence." When a young man of eighteen Philip left a life of comfort to go to Rome and find out God's will for him. Beginning in a very humble way, by speaking of God to street-corner acquaintances and such-like, he gradually became the Apostle of Rome, and won the young men of what was then an evil and worldly city to follow his example of purity and listen to his words of wisdom. After working for some time as a layman, he was ordained priest, and gradually accomplished the great work of founding the Oratory. All Rome loved the beautiful old Saint, with his snow-white beard and bright eyes. He had a cheerful, loving greeting for everybody, and it is nice to remember that he had a very special one for the young English seminarists who were so soon to suffer martyrdom at the hands of their own countrymen at

Tyburn. When these English students passed St. Philip in the street, he would give them his blessing, saying, "Hail, flowers of martyrdom!"

Another thing about St. Philip was that he was very fond of laughter and jokes. Once two very important dignitaries came to see him, and he insisted on reading funny stories to them out of a new book he had got, all the time they were with him. They were rather shocked, because they thought holy people ought to be very solemn and serious, so they went away thinking he was not very holy after all; and that pleased St. Philip's humility very much.

St. Philip did most of his work in the confessional, healing thousands of hearts wounded by mortal sin, and teaching his penitents how to be strong and keep from falling again.

He had a very great devotion to the Mass. During the last few years of his life he was allowed to say his Mass in a little chapel adjoining his own room. When he reached the *Agnus Dei,* the server and those hearing Mass would go out, and St. Philip would be left alone to adore the sacrificed Lamb of God. They would hang a notice on the door, saying, "Silence. The Father is saying Mass." After about two hours the server would return, and the Mass would be finished. Those who saw St. Philip's face after this time of prayer would see that, like Moses, he had indeed been face to face with God.

Feast.—May 26.

Emblem.—Lily by his side, Angel with open book on one knee before him.

BLESSED EDMUND CAMPION (1540-1581)

Blessed Edmund Campion was one of those brave men who, for love of Christ and the Catholic Church and his countrymen, "left all things"—friends, happiness, fame—to go abroad and study for the priesthood, and come back to a hard life of work and danger, until he should be hunted down, caught, tortured, hanged, drawn, and quartered. Edmund Campion was already a famous scholar at Oxford

when he chose "the way of the Cross". He had twice as a boy come under the notice of Queen Elizabeth, having been appointed to read the address when she visited his school, and also again at Oxford. The great Cecil himself, on hearing Campion had left England for Douay, remarked, "It is a very great pity, for Master Campion was one of the diamonds of England". Campion was not only wonderfully gifted as an orator, a writer, and a scholar, but his personality was so full of charm that everyone who knew him loved him, and everywhere he made many friends and no enemies—except those people who were his enemies on account of his Faith. Here are some stories that tell of his adventures in the service of Christ and his countrymen:

Along the Road to Rome.

Blessed Edmund Campion had spent two years at the English seminary at Douay, and had won the hearts of all his fellow-students, when he went to Dr. Allen (the founder of the seminary) and told him something that came as a great shock and disappointment to Allen, who thought very highly of Campion and counted him as the best of his brave little company of Christ's soldiers. Campion, though he longed with all his heart to get back to England and begin the work of ministering to the poor soul-starved Catholics and win his martyr's crown, had come to feel that it was God's will he should have a longer and harder training, and become a more perfect soldier, before going forth to the battle. What he told Dr. Allen was that he wished to go to Rome and join the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus was a new Order, and had but few English members, and there seemed little chance of its sending priests to England. Still, Dr. Allen let Campion go. Some months later a man who had been a student at Oxford in Campion's time, paid a visit to his old college, where many of Campion's friends still were. He told them a story that astonished them very much. How, as he rode along on the Italian frontier, he passed a poor man, tramping along on foot on the dusty road. He glanced at the beggar as he passed

and rode on. But presently it struck him he knew that face; so he turned and rode after him. To his surprise he found that it was Edmund Campion, once the tutor of his college, fastidious, refined, not given at all to "roughing it". He said how sorry he was to see his old friend in that plight, promised to help him in any way he could, and offered him his purse. But Campion, though dusty and travel-stained, seemed full of a new joy; and he used his old eloquence to speak to the horseman about "the contempt of this world, and the eminent dignity of serving Christ in poverty". He refused the purse, and tramped on, as Christ had once tramped the roads, for he was preparing to face death, as Christ had faced it.

At Rome he was at once received into the Society of Jesus, and now was able to give up his own will altogether and put himself in everything under "holy obedience".

Called at Last to Go Forth.

Campion had been sent to the Jesuit Novitiate in Bohemia and from there to the college in Prague. He had spent some years here, studying and spending his recreation in every humble duty he could find, from washing dishes in the kitchen to teaching Catechism to the children, when at last came the call he so longed for. But before he received it a rumour had reached the college at Prague that the Father-General had been persuaded by Cardinal Allen to send some of his sons to the English Mission. The Fathers at Prague guessed that Campion would be among the number. Their hearts were stirred, for they knew that he would be going forth to martyrdom. One day as Campion entered his little room he noticed that over the door had been written in scroll letters "P(ater) EDMUNDUS CAMPIANUS, MARTYR". On the wall at the head of his bed he found painted a wreath. When his Superior sent for him he was filled with confusion because of what his fellow-priests had done. "The Fathers verily do seem to suspect something about me", he said humbly. "I hope their suspicions may come true!" adding, "God's will be done, not mine." Then his Superior told him he

had been sent for to go quickly to Rome and then set out for England. He could hardly hide his feelings, and as soon as he could he went to his room and fell on his knees in tears, offering himself without any restraint, " whether it were to rack, cross-quartering, or any other torment or death whatsoever ".

Saved by a Little Maidservant's Quick Wits.

After a short stay in Rome, a tramp across Europe with other priests bound for England, and an exciting time crossing the Channel and landing at Dover disguised as a jewel merchant, with one lay-brother as companion, Fr. Campion set out on his adventurous life. First in the Midlands, and later in the North, he travelled along the roads on horseback, dressed in layman's clothes, Brother Emerson passing for his servant. They would stop at a big house in which Catholics were expecting them, knock at the door, and be admitted as if they were ordinary callers. Then they would be taken into an inner room, and the faithful Catholics would fall on their knees and receive Fr. Campion's blessing. He would hear their Confessions and prepare everything for Mass. At dawn the next day he would say Mass, and everyone would receive Holy Communion. Then he would leave quietly and ride on to another house. Or sometimes spend some days teaching, preaching, receiving converts, or reconciling Catholics who had fallen away. He describes it all in his letters. He tells how sometimes as all were sitting at table there would come a knock; all would jump up like deer that had been startled; for there was always the fear of the pursuivants or priest-catchers, who were soon hot on Campion's trail. Once, while he was staying in a big house, he had a very narrow escape. He was walking in the garden, thinking he was quite safe, when some of the priest-catchers came prowling round. A little maid-servant, coming out of the house just then, saw the terrible danger. There was no time to warn Fr. Edmund and hurry him to the secret room. So she took a very bold step. Running up to him as if he was one of the servants

with whom she was in a temper, she shoved him into a very dirty little pond! The priest-catcher, passing by, only laughed to see an unfortunate man crawling out of the pond covered with black slime, and never suspected it was the great Fr. Campion for whom he was searching. Another time a little boy heard him being described by a priest-catcher to the sheriff, and ran to the inn where he was staying and warned him just in time.

Discovered in the Secret Room at Lyford Grange.

A year or so had passed like this, and Fr. Campion had done untold good, cheering up the oppressed Catholics and the priests who served them in secret. He had written a book and had it secretly printed on a press in the attic of a gentleman's house. It had made a great stir, and the Protestants were determined to kill him. He knew it, but was not afraid. As he passed the gallows at Tyburn (where Marble Arch now stands) he would pause, and take off his hat in honour of the brave martyrs who had already suffered there, and those who would in the future.

He had been ordered to the North for greater safety. On his way he stopped at Lyford Grange. A large party of Catholics had come to hear him preach and say Mass. A man called Eliot, who had given up the Faith, was living an evil life, and was now being employed by the Protestants as a priest-catcher, was admitted among the guests. The cook who let him in had known him in his Catholic days, and not knowing of his present evil ways, whispered to him that there was a treat in store—a sermon by the great Fr. Campion! Eliot was delighted—he had hardly hoped for such success. He had the warrant for Campion's arrest in his pocket. He went upstairs to Mass looking very pious; but first he had sent a message to the sheriff. Soon after Mass the watcher gave warning of danger. Campion and two priests were hurried into a secret room behind the oak-panelling, and, though the sheriff's men, under Eliot, searched high and low, and smashed in much of the wall, they found nothing.

It was after the last and final search that, as Eliot

walked down the stairs with a faithful old servant of the house, he struck his hand on the wall, saying, "We have not broken through here yet". The old man went very white, and murmured something about there having been enough wall destroyed already. But Eliot's sharp eyes had noticed him turn pale, and he sent for a smith's hammer. The thin panelling was crashed through, and there behind it lay Fr. Campion.

He was led away prisoner with several other Catholics, Eliot prancing triumphantly on his horse at the head of the sad little procession, though the country people cried "Judas!" as they saw him go by.

"Come Rack, Come Rope."

It was in those last dangerous months before his arrest that Edmund Campion had written to his friends abroad that they would be carrying on, "come rack, come rope", to the end. Those words of his have become almost proverbial now. They were prophetic of what he was to suffer. He was led through London, his feet tied under his horse, his hands roped behind his back, a paper pinned in the front of his hat, "Campion the Seditious Jesuit". He was thrown into "Little Ease", the cell at the Tower which is too small for a man to stand up or lie down in. He was taken before Queen Elizabeth, who smiled on him as in the past, and offered him freedom under terms he could not accept. Three times he was cruelly racked, the third time so severely he thought they meant to kill him. During the torture they questioned him, but, brave as ever, and faithful to his companions and the people who had harboured him, he would give no information. About the same time much information had been got by spies and by tricking other prisoners into speaking, and, as it happened, nearly all the people who had received Fr. Campion were known. The Protestants were mean enough to give out publicly that Campion had betrayed his friends while on the rack. This must have been one of his hardest trials. The rackmaster admitted later that it had been impossible to get any new information out of Fr. Campion.

At last came the day of the trial in Westminster Hall. The accusation of treason was read out, and the prisoners (Campion and two seminary priests, Sherwin and Bryant) were called upon to plead guilty or not guilty. All raised their right hands to signify not guilty—all but Campion: his hand lay numb and limp, powerless since his last racking. One of his companions, "humbly kissing the sacred hands so wrung for the confession of Christ", raised the right arm high. The Spanish Ambassador, standing near, noticed with pity that all the finger-nails were gone from Campion's hands. No accusation of treason could be proved. But somehow or other the verdict of guilty was brought in, and the very horrible death sentence read out.

From the Tower to Tyburn.

On a dark, rainy morning the three prisoners were led out of the Tower, tied on hurdles at the heels of two horses, and dragged through the muddy streets. Some people laughed, others wept; some ran by the side trying to get last words with Fr. Campion. At one point, the horses being held up for a minute, a man stepped forward and wiped the mud from Campion's face. The people saw that the three priests were smiling, even laughing now and then; and a cry of astonishment went up, "They are laughing! They don't care for death!" At last Tyburn was reached. A vast crowd was waiting round the gallows. Campion was the first to have the rope placed round his neck as he stood on the cart beneath the gallows. The Protestants, shouting at him, trying to force him to argue, gave him no chance to speak or liberty to pray. More than one patient, ready answer showed Campion's old spirit was still there. Towards the end he was reciting one of the Latin prayers he loved so much. A scoffing Protestant shouted to him to use the English tongue. "I will pray unto God", replied Campion, "in a language which we both well understand!"

The cart was drawn away. The crowd — always Campion's crowd—groaned. Some gentleman in authority mercifully stopped the hangman from cutting the rope

until he was quite dead. And so this brave soldier of Christ, worthy son of St. Ignatius, "diamond of England", won his martyr's crown.

As the executioner finished his cruel work, a drop of the martyr's blood splashed on to a young man standing by. It was the final argument that won him for Christ; and a few years later he was back at Tyburn, this time to suffer himself. And so literally "the blood of the martyrs" proved "the seed of the Church". And the seed then sown so generously at Tyburn by Blessed Edmund Campion and his glorious comrades is springing up now in the England they loved so well.

Feast.—December 1.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL (1576-1660)

St. Vincent gave his whole life to relieving suffering people—whether they suffered spiritually or in their bodies, whether from poverty and sickness, or injustice and cruelty. He probably relieved more suffering people during his life than any other man who ever lived, and he founded several institutions which should carry on his great work as long as the world lasts and the Catholic Church ministers to its needs. He was the son of a French peasant, and from boyhood showed his love of God and of God's poor. He was in time ordained priest, and soon after having said his first Mass (in a little mountain church, for the sake of greater recollection) his adventures began. The following stories of episodes in his life will give some idea of his character and his life-work :

How St. Vincent was Captured by Pirates and Sold into Slavery.

The young priest Vincent had one day to take a short voyage on a business matter. It was found that the ship was being chased by Turkish pirates. A sharp fight took place; arrows flew thick, and soon the "sea-wolves" had boarded the peaceful merchant ship and were taking prisoner both crew and passengers. Vincent had been

wounded by an arrow. His wound was roughly bound up by the Turks, and a rope tied round his neck. He was led through the streets of Tunis with his luckless companions and offered for sale in the market. Dealers came up and put the prisoners through their paces, as if they were beasts. Vincent was bought by a sailor; but he suffered so from sea-sickness that his master sold him to an old man who was making experiments to discover the philosopher's stone. When after several years this old man died, Vincent passed into the hands of a Frenchman who had once been a Catholic. This man had three Turkish wives. One of them noticed the young French slave as he worked in the fields. She asked him to sing to her. So he sang the sad Psalm the captive Jews sang, in which come the words, "For they that led us away captive required of us a song, and melody in our heaviness". His tears flowed as he sang, thinking how he, a priest, was spending his life as a slave. He also sang the *Salve,* and other Catholic hymns. The woman told her husband about these songs, and said she wondered how he could have given up such a beautiful religion. The man's conscience was touched, and he, too, spoke to Vincent. When the chance came, they both took ship for France. Finally they went to Rome, and the man entered a penitential religious Order to expiate his sins, and Vincent was taken into the service of a Cardinal.

St. Vincent Takes the Place of a Prisoner and Works in Fetters.

Some years later, after working for God in various ways, St. Vincent was told by his spiritual director to leave the parish where he was doing a wonderful work, and become tutor to the sons of a very rich and important nobleman named de Gondi. This position gave him the chance of doing many of the great works by which he will always be remembered. One of these was in connection with the great State prisons, and the galleys where the prisoners worked off their "hard labour" at the oars. De Gondi was Master of the Royal Galleys, and he ap-

pointed St. Vincent their chaplain. He would spend day after day among these miserable men as they sat chained to their seats, pulling at the oars, cheering them, comforting them, and raising up their thoughts to heaven. From the galleys he went on to the prisons. He was horrified at what he found there—men treated far worse than beasts, herded together in filthy quarters, ill-fed, loaded with chains, without hope, and, worst of all, giving way to despair and blaspheming God.

One day he came on a man in a rage of despair as he thought of his wife and children, and could see no hope of freedom ahead. St. Vincent, filled with pity, managed to persuade the gaoler to let him put on the chains, while the unhappy man went free. The gaoler did not know who the poorly-clad visitor was, and agreed. And so St. Vincent worked among the prisoners in conditions more horrible than we can imagine for several weeks, until he was discovered. By the end of that time he had learnt enough to make him feel he would never rest until things were different in the prisons. All his life the scars of his fetters showed on his legs, and the memory of what human beings can suffer remained in his heart. But as to the State prisons of France, he little by little won his point, and got the authorities to change the treatment of the prisoners altogether.

The Foundlings and the Sisters of Charity.

One day St. Vincent discovered that the little babies and the small children who were found abandoned in the streets of Paris were taken to a house where some women who were paid by the Government looked after them, and treated them so cruelly and neglected them so badly that many of them died in a few days, and others lived on in pain and misery. He was filled with dismay; and collecting the poor little ones together in a house, he got some of his Ladies of Charity to look after them. He established a Foundling Hospital, and cared for thousands of children. That is why his statue always shows him with a child in his arms and one at his side.

Finding that the ladies of Paris could not do the work for the poor themselves, he got some peasant girls from the country who wished to give their lives to God, and had them trained. They lived together under a very good and noble-minded lady, Blessed Louise de Marillac, and soon the big white *cornettes* of the French peasants became a familiar sight in the slums of Paris as the Sisters went about doing good. In time they came to be known as the sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; and now they work in every big town the world over, still dressed like the French peasant women in the days of St. Vincent.

Many other good works the brave, kind-hearted St. Vincent managed to carry through when other people would scarcely have dared to think of them, let alone begin them and persuade others to supply the money and the helpers to keep them going. But at last the body he had worked so hard began to give way. He grew very ill, and was racked with pain day and night. His legs were so bad that he could not walk, and had to use a little carriage. This he called "his disgrace"; and, of course, it was always full of poor sick folk he had picked up at street corners and was driving to hospital or to one of his institutions. Still, he was always brave and smiling, even merry, and full of kind words for everybody. And so at last he died, leaving a world very much happier and better for his having lived in it, and many thousands of poor and suffering people blessing his name—as they have done ever since, and always will do.

Feast.—July 19.

Emblem.—Infant in his arms; surrounded by Sisters of Charity.

THE CHILD-MARTYRS OF UGANDA

When, in 1874, the country of Uganda was discovered, and it was found to be inhabited by a race of intelligent negroes, partly civilised and having a King and parliament, it was at once decided to send out missionaries to teach them the true Faith. The King said he would be

glad to welcome the missionaries; and at first he was very kind to them. But later on both he and his son, Mwanga, were turned against them by Moslem slave-dealers, and terrible persecutions took place. A great many of Mwanga's subjects had become good and faithful Christians, among them many little boys, some of whom were the King's own pages. The following is the story of how these little black boys suffered martyrdom, and showed themselves as brave in suffering for Christ as any of the glorious martyrs of the Church:

Here is the story of the first boy-martyr. One day as Mwanga was out walking he noticed two of his pages sitting together, deeply intent about something. Wondering what it could be, he drew near to them, and saw that one of the boys was teaching something to the other. "What are you doing there?" inquired the King, scowling angrily at the boy, for he recognised him as one of the Christians. The boy knew, of course, that Mwanga now hated the Christians, and had sworn to kill them all, but, nothing daunted, he spoke up bravely. "I am teaching the Catechism", he replied. Sudden rage filled the King, and drawing his sword he ran it through the brave young page, and left him dead at the side of his terrified companion.

This terrible deed gave the signal for the general outbreak of persecution. That evening the King sent for his Minister and gave orders for the slaughter of every one of "the people who pray" (as the Christians were always called).

Fr. Lourdel has described the scene he saw as he waited hour after hour to try and get a word with Mwanga and plead for his poor people. The Christians had been seized by the King's men and brought together into the courtyard in front of the King's apartments. Here is the story in Fr. Lourdel's own words:

"The faces of many of our converts beamed with joy; some looked rather frightened, whilst others answered boldly, when their heathen friends told them they ought to have run away: 'Run away! Why should I?'

"The first called out was Charles Luanga, the head of the King's pages, many of whom were Christians. He and his comrades were greeted with yells of derision, in which the King's stentorian voice was plainly audible. Mwanga addressed bitter reproaches to them; then he said, 'Let all who pray stand apart'. Charles Luanga instantly stepped out, hand in hand with Kigito, a catechumen, a mere boy, but whose courage and firmness were far beyond his years. All the Christians in the company followed their example. At a sign from the King they were seized, bound with ropes and roughly dragged out of the courtyard. The young men of eighteen to twenty-five years of age were bound together; the children formed a second troop. They were tied so tightly and so closely to one another that they could only walk with the greatest difficulty, taking tiny steps and continually knocking up against each other. I noticed that little Kigito laughed at this as merrily as if he were at play with his companions. He was the son of one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. Kigito had long been entreating me to baptise him, on the plea that the King would soon put him to death, and I had promised, seeing him in such good dispositions, to do so in a month's time. But God had decreed that this chosen soul should be regenerated in the baptism of blood.

"As they passed before me, these brave confessors looked their last farewell, and I prayed for them that their courage might not fail under the torture they were to undergo. I was not allowed to speak a word of encouragement to them, and had to content myself with reading in their countenances the resignation, the holy joy, the manly courage of their hearts; and in all my sorrow I thanked God that He had chosen these negro children to bear the first witness to the Faith in Uganda."

Here is the terrible story of how those brave little boys suffered and died for Christ our Lord. After Charles Luango, their head, had been taken from them (in hopes that without their leader they would give way and renounce their Faith) and had been burnt to death by slow

fire, the executioners turned their attention to the band of children.

"Three of the youngest pages," says Fr. Lourdel, "excited the compassion of the head executioner, who in the course of a long life had never had to practise such cruelties on children of such tender years. 'Only tell the King that you will not pray any more,' he said to them, 'and he will pardon you.' 'We will never leave off praying as long as we live!' was the indignant reply of the boys. They were accordingly bound and led out with the others, to the number of twenty-four, on to a hill which rises opposite to the mission-house. A quantity of dried reeds had been taken there, and of these the executioners made huge faggots, in each of which one of the victims was bound up. They were then laid on the ground side by side, the feet all being turned the same way.

"Among these boys was one of the chief executioner's own sons. The unhappy father used every endeavour to induce him to utter a word which could be construed into a denial of his Faith; but his efforts were fruitless. He hoped that the sight of the torture in store for him might change the boy's mind, but he hoped in vain; the child allowed himself to be bound in the bundle of reeds without a word or struggle. At the last moment the father made a final attempt. 'My boy,' he entreated, 'only let me hide you at home; nobody comes that way; you will never be found out.' 'No, father,' replied the boy, 'you shall not hide me. I know well enough why I am put to death; it is because of my religion. Let me die, father!'

"To make his death easier the executioner ordered one of his men to unbind the boy, and give him a hard blow on the back of his neck. Death was instantaneous, and the boy was replaced in the bundle of reeds to be burned with the rest.

"Then the reeds were set on fire at the end where the feet of the victims were, in order that their sufferings might be more protracted, and that some might perhaps, when the flames reached them, be prevailed on to deny their Faith. A vain hope! The martyrs voices were

heard, it is true, but only when joining in the prayers which we had taught them to recite!

"Half an hour later the funeral pile had burnt down, and nothing remained but rows of charred corpses covered with ashes. Three of the youngest pages had been spared by the executioner; but the terrible fate of their comrades had not daunted their courage; on the contrary, they waited with impatience for their turn to come.

"The executioner, seeing children so young, could hardly believe his senses. He determined to cut their bonds and take them back to prison. Grieved to the heart to see the hoped-for crown fade from before their eyes, they exclaimed, 'Why do you not put us to death, too? We are Christians like those whom you have burnt; we will not forsake our religion—never, never!' . . . These generous boys were the only survivors of the glorious band of martyrs."

FOURTH YEAR

(*Age: about 11.*)

N.B.—The material in this fourth year will possibly be found too much for twelve months' work in addition to the necessary doctrinal instruction, etc. It is for the teacher to select from the material here given, according to need and opportunity.

FOURTH YEAR

Old Testament: Short History of Israel and Juda from Death of Solomon to the Captivities

New Testament Stories

Church History (Stories told in their Historical Setting):

- st. cecilia and other martyrs (the persecutions)
- st. benedict (the monks)
- bl. margaret clitherow (the tudor persecutions)
- st. francis xavier (the missionaries)

china: the church's biggest task

FOURTH YEAR

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

SHORT HISTORY OF THE JEWS FROM DEATH OF SOLOMON TO CAPTIVITIES

(*N.B.—This period of Old Testament history is told chiefly in the books of Kings, which are remarkable (says Archbishop Goodier) as being the first attempt at writing real history to be found amongst any ancient people. It is on the whole a dismal story of the unfaithfulness of the chosen people to God.*

No useful purpose is served by studying the period at great length or making the children master the different reigns, and so on. The centre of interest should be the Prophets. To save teachers the trouble of working out a summary of the period for themselves, it is given here in a form which can be passed on (as much of it as is desirable) without much elaboration. Scripture references are given, but in this year they are not necessarily meant to be read up except where the brief story-heading in heavy type indicates that a story should be told in detail. The histories of Israel and Juda are given separately.)

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (950-722 B.C.)

1. **How the Children of Israel were Divided into Two Nations—Juda and Israel.** (Story in detail from 3 Kings xi. 43 and xii. 1-25.)

THE King of Israel, Jeroboam, feared the Israelites would go up to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple and be led to return to the King of Juda, so he made two golden calves and set them up in Dan and Bethel, and said to the people, "Go ye no more to Jeru-

salem : behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt ". Thus he led the people away from God and " made Israel to sin ". Nearly all the eighteen Kings who succeeded him were wicked, both in their irreligion and their violent and bloodthirsty deeds. The worst of all was Achab. He reigned twenty years (875-853 B.C.) and fought a good deal against the Kings of Syria. (There was indeed a more dangerous enemy than Syria, the powerful empire of Assyria, but during Achab's reign Assyria was held in check by an alliance of the smaller states.) Achab married Jezabel, the pagan daughter of the Phoenician King of Tyre and Sidon, and he allowed her to do many evil things in the kingdom, especially to introduce the worship of the Phoenician sun-god Baal and the goddess Astarte. Achab even built a temple of Baal in Samaria, which was the capital of Israel (3 Kings xii.-xvi.).

2. It was during the reign of Achab that Elias appeared, the first of the long line of great prophets. When Kings and people were going after the false gods of other nations, he proclaimed fearlessly that Jehovah was the only God, and that He would punish wickedness. The Jews remembered Elias as a messenger of God second only to Moses, and they expected him to come on earth again in the times of the Messias. The great impression he made on the Jewish mind is shown by the stories related about him and his disciple Eliseus, which were collected by the inspired writer in the third and fourth books of Kings.

How Elias Warned Achab, and Fled to the Torrent Carith and was Fed by Ravens (3 Kings xvii. 1-7).

How Elias Caused a Pot of Meal and a Cruise of Oil not to Grow Less for a Widow Woman, and Raised her Son to Life (3 Kings xvii. 9-24).

Jezabel, wishing to root out the worship of God from Achab's kingdom, sent and had all the prophets slain—all but 100 who were secretly hidden in a cave by Abdias, a prophet.

How Elias on Mount Carmel Challenged the Priests of Baal, and God's Power Overcame Them (3 Kings xviii. 15-46).

After this Jezabel tried to have Elias killed, and he fled to safety. God strengthened and comforted him in a dream, and told him to go and anoint Hazael to be King of Syria and Jehu King of Israel, and to call Eliseus to be prophet in his place. So he did as God told him; and finding Eliseus ploughing in a field, threw his mantle over him and called him to follow, and Eliseus became his disciple (3 Kings xix.).

How Jezabel Murdered an Innocent Man so as to Get his Vineyard (3 Kings xxi. 1-29).

Meanwhile, Juda and Israel had become allies for the time being, and they went to war together against the Syrians. In the battle Achab was slain by an arrow, and (as Elias had prophesied) the dogs came and licked the blood from his chariot (3 Kings xxii. 29-40). Ochozias now became King of Israel, and was just as bad as Achab and his forefathers (3 Kings xxii. 52-54).

How Elias Called Down Fire on the Soldiers of Ochozias (4 Kings i. 1-17).

How Elias was Taken up to Heaven in a Fiery Chariot, and Eliseus Succeeded Him (4 Kings ii. 1-25).

How Eliseus Helped a Woman Troubled by her Creditors, and Raised a Dead Boy to Life (4 Kings iv. 1-37).

Ochozias was succeeded by his brother Joram; and he also did evil in the sight of the Lord.

How Eliseus Cured Naaman of Leprosy (4 Kings v. 1-27).

How Eliseus Spared the Army of the King of Syria (4 Kings vi. 8-23).

After this Eliseus sent word to Jehu, who had been anointed King by Elias, and he came in his chariot with his troop. And he slew Joram in Naboth's vineyard; and

when Jezabel looked out of the window as he drove by her palace, he cried to her servants to throw her down; and they threw her down, and the dogs ate her body, as Elias had prophesied. Then Jehu reigned as King. He killed all the house of Achab, and rooted out of his kingdom the worship of Baal, killing all Baal's followers and destroying his temple. Yet even Jehu kept the golden calves that Jeroboam had set up (4 Kings ix. and x.). Jehu secured peace with Assyria by paying tribute.

3. The next two Kings, Joachaz and Joas, were idolaters, and spent their time in wars with Syria and Juda. After them came Jeroboam II (782-746 B.C.), who was an idolater, but also a successful warrior, who reigned many years, made Israel prosperous, and gained back the territories that his predecessors had lost (4 Kings xiii. and xiv.). It was in his reign that the prophet **Amos** (about 760 B.C.) appeared. He came from Juda to the King's sanctuary at Bethel, a rough shepherd amongst the astonished priests and people, and delivered the message he had received from God (Amos vii. 10-15). In fierce language he told them that Jehovah is the one God, and that He cares for justice and goodness more than for sacrifices. When the day of the Lord comes, wicked Israelites will have just as much to fear from His judgment as the Gentiles. And he prophesied the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of Israel.

What the Prophet Amos (the Prophet of God's Anger) said to the people of Israel. (Read some passages to the children—e.g. Amos iv. 1-13; v. 1-27; vi. 1-15.)

Some years after Amos came another great prophet, **Osee** (740 B.C.). He repeats the warnings of Amos about the punishment to come. But he brings in an idea that was new to the Jews, that God *loves* men. He remains faithful to His chosen people, and after all the sufferings He will reconcile them to Himself once more. Osee speaks of the nation as the uiworthy bride of God. Our Lord often used the words of Osee, and called Himself the Bridegroom.

The Words of the Prophet Osee (the Prophet of God's Love) to Israel. (Read Osee iv. 1-3; viii. 1-14; vi. 1-6 [cf. Matt. ix. 13]; and ii. 7-24.)

The warnings of the prophets had no effect on Israel, which went from bad to worse in wickedness and violence. After Jeroboam II six more Kings followed each other, each one murdering the one before him. Meanwhile all this time the great military empire of Assyria had been in the background, sometimes demanding and getting tribute from the small kingdoms of Palestine, and now a great King of Assyria arose named Tiglath-Pileser, who wished to make his dominions more united. (Map wanted here.) About 740 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser turned his attention to subjugating the three warring kingdoms of Palestine. Juda submitted and paid tribute; Israel and Syria submitted at first, but afterwards plotted to revolt. With the idea of compelling the southern kingdom to join them, the two allies made war on Juda and besieged Jerusalem, but Tiglath-Pileser came on the scene again, and occupied Syria and Israel (734 B.C.). The end of Israel came a few years later, when the vassal King of Israel revolted and tried to make an alliance with Egypt. The Assyrian armies came once more, Samaria was taken after a siege of three years, and all the people of the northern kingdom (the Ten Tribes), except the poorest, were carried off and deported to other parts of the Assyrian Empire and never came back. This Captivity happened in 722 B.C. The Assyrian Emperor replaced the Israelites with pagan peoples from various parts, who came to be known as the Samaritans. They learned the worship of Jehovah, but kept some remains of their own idolatrous religions also. (All this is related in 4 Kings xv. 8-38 and xvii. 1-41.)

THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM (950-586 B.C.)

1. The kingdom of Juda managed to keep alive 140 years longer than Israel. On the whole the Kings of Juda were more faithful to God than the northern Kings; some of

them introduced false gods and wicked customs, but others made the people serve God faithfully. The first six Kings were Roboam, Abiam, Asa, Josaphat, Joram, and Ochozias; they had many wars with the surrounding countries, especially Egypt. Joram married Athalia, the daughter of Jezabel, and set up the worship of Baal in the high places. When he and his son died, Athalia murdered the rest of the royal family and reigned herself for six years. But a baby Prince (Joas) had been saved by a nurse and hidden in the Temple, and when he was seven years old a revolt led by Joiada the High Priest overthrew Athalia, and Joas was made King (836 B. C.). The high places were destroyed again and the Temple was repaired, and Joas was kept straight as long as Joiada lived, but fell away when he died. Other Kings followed, mostly unfaithful to God (4 Kings and 2 Par.).

2. But the worst and weakest of the Kings of Juda was Achaz (735-725 B.C.). He copied all the idolatries of the surrounding nations, and even sacrificed his own son as a burnt-offering to Moloch (4 Kings xvi. 1-4). During his reign the great prophet **Isaias** is the chief figure. Isaias was not a rough countryman like Amos, but a well-educated man of high rank who for forty years had great influence on the policy of the little nation that stood alone in the midst of so many powerful enemies, and always he urged King and people to stand alone fearlessly, trusting to God and not to alliances with the Gentiles. Achaz followed the advice of Isaias when he refused to join the Kings of Syria and Israel in a league against Assyria; but he went against this advice when he went to Damascus and gave to the Assyrian King all the treasures of the Temple and made himself a vassal of Assyria. (While at Damascus Achaz was pleased with a pagan altar he saw there, and had one made like it in the Temple at Jerusalem [4 Kings xvi. 7-16].) Isaias foresaw that the Assyrians would become God's instrument to punish the chosen people for their sins.

The Prophet Isaias Predicts God's Judgment on His People. (Read the Parable of the Vineyard, Isa. v. 1-7 [cf. Matt. xxi. 33], and also x. 1-6.)

3. Achaz was succeeded by Ezechias (725 B.C.), who reigned twenty-nine years. He served God faithfully and destroyed the heathen shrines and all images, even the brazen serpent of Moses (4 Kings xviii. 1-6). For twenty years he remained a vassal King of Assyria, and then joined an anti-Assyrian league of the small states. Sennacherib, King of the Assyrians, defeated the league, took all the fenced cities of Juda, and made Ezechias pay enormous tribute (4 Kings xviii. 7-16). Meanwhile the empire of Egypt was rising in power, and the Jewish politicians secretly arranged an alliance with Egypt as a help against Assyria, but Isaias held firmly to his principle that it was better to trust in God alone.

How Isaias Told the People to Put their Trust, not in Egypt but in God (Isa. xxxi. 1-9).

Events soon proved that he was right, for Sennacherib made war on Pharao and defeated him; and while the Assyrian army was in that region Sennacherib took the opportunity of demanding the surrender of the city of Jerusalem. It seemed hopeless to resist, but Isaias would not hear of God's holy city and Temple being surrendered, and promised Ezechias that God would save him. And so it happened that "an angel of the Lord" smote Sennacherib's army (the historian Herodotus tells us this visitation was a pestilence).

How Isaias Answered the Threats of the King of the Assyrians (4 Kings xviii. 17-37 and xix. 1-37).

In all the troubles and sufferings of God's chosen people Isaias saw past them to the great Day of the Lord, when God would do judgment on the wicked, and the Messias would come and rule over His purified and happy people, with all the nations subject to them.

The Words of Isaias (the Prophet of the Redeemer) about the Day of the Lord. (Read Isa. xiii. 9-13; xxxiv. 1, 2, 8; xxxv. 1-10; ix. 2-7; xi. 1-6. [The Church uses the words of Isaias a good deal in Advent.] See also the nearly contemporary prophet Micheas, v. 1-6.)

4. Ezechias died in 696 B.C., and was succeeded by Manasses, who brought back every kind of idolatry and wickedness. He persecuted the prophets who protested, and tradition says that he had Isaias sawn in two (4 Kings xxi. 1-17). He and the Kings after him were the vassals of Assyria. The next good King was Josias (639-608 B.C.). He restored the Temple worship which had been so long neglected. A book of the Law of Moses was found in the Temple, and Josias called all the people together, and they agreed to observe the covenant faithfully; and he destroyed all the heathen shrines (4 Kings xxii. and xxiii.). Another war broke out between Egypt and Assyria, and Josias had to take the side of his overlord; he was killed at the battle of Mageddo, and for a while Juda became a tributary of Egypt (4 Kings xxiii. 29-37). But after four years Pharao was defeated again by the Assyrians under Nabuchodonosor their King (but he now called himself King of Babylon); and it became only a question of time before he would crush Juda, too. In this danger some of the Jews still wanted alliance with Egypt, and the more patriotic party, remembering the example of Isaias, said that, whatever happened, no harm could possibly come to the holy city, and they persuaded the King to refuse tribute to Babylon (4 Kings xxiv. 1-9).

5. At this time the great prophet was **Jeremias.** His dreadful task, which he fulfilled with persistence in spite of persecution and imprisonment, was to predict the certain Captivity which was coming. To the party that trusted in Egypt he said that their trust was in vain; and to the wild patriots who believed that God's city could not be harmed he said that the city and the Temple would be destroyed soon, and the people sent into captivity to Babylon. And he had to try to make them all understand

that this was the necessary consequence of their sins and would be for their purification, and one day they would return to Sion.

How Jeremias was the Prophet of the Captivity. (Read Jer. xlvi. 1-12, 24-28; vii. 1-11; vi. 15-26; xx. 1-8; xxv. 8-11.)

The end came rapidly. Nabuchodonosor invested the city and carried off King Joachin and all the chief inhabitants and the treasures of the Temple (599 B.C.), leaving Sedecias as a nominal ruler. Sedecias revolted eleven years later, and the city was taken and destroyed after eighteen months' siege and the Temple was burnt, and the people carried away into Babylon (586 B.C.). There they remained seventy years, but were allowed to keep together and observe their own customs.

How the Jews Went into Captivity (4 Kings xxv. 1-12).

How Jeremias Remained and Wept over the Destroyed City. (The Church uses his words in Holy Week.) (Lam. i. 1-6, 12; ii. 13-16.)

NEW TESTAMENT STORIES

1. How our Lord cleansed the Temple, driving out the money-changers and the people using it as a market-place (John ii. 13-22).

2. About a ruler called Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night to ask Him about the new life (John iii. 1-21). And another ruler, who went away sad when he had heard our Lord's answer, for he loved his riches more than God (Luke xviii. 18-30).

3. About a Samaritan woman with whom Jesus talked while He was resting by Jacob's Well and the disciples had gone to buy food (John iv. 1-43).

4. About a man born blind whom Jesus cured; and how

the Pharisees cast him out of the Synagogue because of it (John ix. 1-38).

5. How our Lord cast out an evil spirit from a boy, though the disciples had not been able to do it (Mark ix. 13-28).

6. How a woman who was a sinner came to Jesus as He sat at a feast, and wept at His feet; and how Jesus answered the unkind thoughts of the Pharisees (Luke vii. 36-50).

7. How Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John xiii. 1-15).

8. Of our Lord's Resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 2-4), and how the women found the stone rolled away (Mark xvi. 1-8). How our Lord appeared to Magdalen (John xx. 3-18), and to the two disciples (Luke xxiv. 13-35), and to the Apostles in the upper room (Luke xxiv. 36-49 and John xx. 19-23), and again after eight days (John xx. 24-29).

9. How our Lord ate with the disciples by the sea of Tiberias (John xxi. 1-19), and appeared to all of them in the mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16-20); and ascended into heaven (Acts i. 9-12). And how the Apostles waited in the upper room (Acts i. 13-26).

10. How our Lord had promised the Holy Spirit, before His Passion (John xvi. 5-13) and before His Ascension (Acts i. 8); and how His promise was fulfilled (Acts ii. 1-24).

THE SAINTS

THE PERSECUTIONS

(St. Ignatius of Antioch, Martyrs of Lyons, St. Cecilia, etc.)

The Early Martyrs.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Our Lord Himself was crucified; all the Apostles except St. John died for Him; so did all the first twenty-five Popes except three or four. In all ages the Church has her martyrs, but for the first 300 years persecution and martyrdom was the Church's ordinary life. There were peaceful intervals now and then; but it was always dangerous to be a Christian, and at any time the persecutions might break out. During those first three centuries the world did everything it could to crush out the religion founded by our Lord, but the persecutions had just the opposite effect; people saw the astonishing heroism of the martyrs—men, women, and children in thousands—and they could see that Jesus Christ was still living and powerful, since He could give ordinary everyday people such supernatural strength. The very word "martyr" means "one who bears witness". We shall tell the story of some of these martyrs, but first let us see how the persecutions of the Church came about.

The Roman Empire.

At the time our Lord lived the world was not divided up into separate countries like it mostly is now. All the civilised world lived in the lands around the Mediterranean (including all France), and it was all held together in one great empire of Rome. (Remind children of Luke ii. 1.) By the time the Apostles were dead, Britain also was part of the Empire. (Map wanted: Empire at time of Trajan or Hadrian.) Outside the Empire there were only tribes

of "barbarians". (There was another great civilised empire—much older—in China, but it had little to do with the rest of the world.) Wherever the Roman soldiers kept order there were good roads, and fine towns, and peaceful life; that is why Christianity was able to spread so quickly. Most of the work was done by slaves, but that seemed natural to everybody, and the slaves were treated well enough on the whole. As for religion, the Romans had their own gods (Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and so on), but they did not interfere with people's religion: everybody in the Empire was free to worship any gods they liked. But there was one thing everybody was expected to do, and that was to pay divine honour to the image of the Emperor —something like the way everyone in the British Empire is expected to salute the Union Jack and stand up for "God save the King", only in the case of the Roman Emperor it was divine honour, because he was looked on as a sort of god on earth, and his image was put with the other gods. It was only a matter of putting a bit of incense on a fire before the image; but the Christians could not do it, because they had to hold to the one true God; and that is why they came to be persecuted, so that at last it came to be a struggle for victory between the Empire and the Church, between Christ and Caesar. In the end Caesar was conquered by the strength of the martyrs, and the Emperor and the Empire became Christian. So now let us see some of the things that happened.

St. Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 107).

It was some time before the Roman authorities realised that there was such a thing as the Catholic Church in existence; at first they took little notice of it, and even gave Christians the ordinary protection of the law, because they seemed to be only a sect of the Jews.* When they did realise it, they declared that Christianity was a secret

* The first persecution under Nero was only a short one, and probably only at Rome; it was not the outcome of a policy, but seems to have been caused by Nero's wish to find scapegoats for the burning of the city. Nevertheless from Nero's time onwards it was illegal to be a Christian.

society, and therefore illegal; and Christians were to be punished if they were denounced to the authorities and convicted. St. Ignatius of Antioch is one of the best-known martyrs of this period. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and had been from the beginning one of the centres of Christianity (see Acts ii.). It is said that Ignatius was the child our Lord took in his arms (Mark ix. 35): anyhow, it is certain that he had been a disciple of the Apostles themselves, and he was "like them in all things," say those who knew him. When the Bishop of Antioch (Evodius, the first Bishop after St. Peter) was martyred, Ignatius was chosen to fill his place. The one thing that troubled him (though he rejoiced at it for the sake of others) was that the persecution had died down a little, for he longed to be a "perfect disciple" and "to attain to the true love of Christ" by martyrdom. Soon the time came. The Emperor Trajan came to Antioch, on his way to the Parthian wars, and Ignatius was brought before him. Trajan asked him a few questions, and Ignatius replied that there is only one God, and the gods of the pagans were evil spirits, and that he carried Christ the Son of God within his own breast.

His Martyrdom.

Trajan ordered him to be carried in chains to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts. When he heard this sentence "he cried out with joy, 'I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast honoured me with a perfect love towards Thee, and hast made me to be put in iron bonds with Thine Apostle Paul'. Having thus spoken, he joyfully suffered his bonds to be put about him, and having first prayed for the church (of Antioch) and commended it with tears unto the Lord, he was hurried away." So he started on the long journey by land and sea, guarded by ten soldiers; first to Laodicea and Smyrna (where he rejoiced to meet his friend the holy Bishop Polycarp), and then to Troas, and through Macedonia and Illyria. It was a triumphal progress in spite of his chains and the bad treatment of the soldiers. Everywhere he was met by the Christians

and welcomed with loving honour as a champion of Christ. At various places on the way he had time to receive representatives of local Churches who came from far and near to see him; and he wrote letters (seven of them survive) full of wise teaching and of joy over his approaching martyrdom. "Now I am beginning to be a disciple," he wrote. We have a good account of everything that happened, because two Christian companions journeyed with him and wrote it afterwards. When they got to the Roman port the public games at the Coliseum (the great open-air theatre which seated 100,000 people, where gladiatorial fights and every kind of cruel spectacle took place) happened to be in full swing. The Christians met him as he came off the ship, and some of them had a mind to try to influence the Coliseum audience in his favour, but he implored them to show a true love to him and do nothing of the kind. "And so all the brethren kneeling down, he prayed to the Son of God on behalf of the Churches, that He would put a stop to the persecution and continue the love of the brethren towards each other." Then he was hurried away, as the soldiers wished to arrive before the end of the games; and he gladly agreed to hasten his pace towards the city, for he was anxious that his crown should not be delayed a moment. So very soon he is standing alone in the middle of the vast arena, while a herald reads his name and his crime and his condemnation by Trajan. Then Ignatius speaks himself to the crowd: "O Romans, ye spectators of this contest, I am not thus condemned for any evil deed, but for the sake of my religion. I am the wheat of God, and by the teeth of wild beasts I shall be ground that I may become the pure bread of Christ." Then the lions are let into the arena—fierce and hungry, for they have been kept without food for this purpose—and the brave Bishop of Antioch has the desire of his heart (A.D. 107).

(N.B.—The above is summarised from the excellent account of St. Ignatius in Brownlow's *Early History of the Church of God.*)

The Martyrs of Lyons (A.D. 177).

Very often the Christians suffered more from mob violence than from the direct persecution of the authorities. They had to live retired lives, cut off from most public and social activities, simply because the worship paid to the Emperor-god formed a part of almost everything that happened in public; and also the open wickedness of pagan life, the banqueting orgies, and the bloodthirsty games of the amphitheatre, were all distasteful to Christians, who found their joy in loving and helping each other. They seemed strange and mysterious people, therefore, and it was known that they had their meetings at night—could it be for any good purpose?—and most of them were slaves and suchlike. In short, the Christians were hated and despised by the average pagan (Tacitus, the pagan writer, calls them "enemies of the human race"), and the most shocking stories were believed about them, especially that they killed children at their meetings and ate their flesh. (No doubt such stories were partly encouraged by the fact that in those days the Church kept the knowledge of her most sacred mysteries—especially the Eucharist—as a secret to be told only to those who were baptised.) At any rate, the pagan populace was ready to believe anything of the hated Christians, and every now and then the mob would break out, hunt out the Christians, and torture and kill them with or without the assistance of the local prefects or governors.

Such an outbreak happened at Lyons in France in the year 177, and we are told all about it in a long letter which the survivors wrote to Pope Eleutherius afterwards (the letter is preserved in Eusebius). First there was a general boycott of Christians in houses, baths, markets—everywhere. Then the rage of the people concentrated on some of the better-known Christians, who had to endure "all the evils that were heaped upon them by the populace, clamours and blows, plunderings and robberies, stonings and imprisonments, and whatsoever a savage people delight to inflict upon enemies." Then they were dragged

before the governor and answered boldly : and some pagan slaves of Christian masters were arrested also, and under threats of torture accused the Christians of sacrificing children and other crimes. Terrible tortures were inflicted on the martyrs—rackings, scourgings, and the applying of red-hot brass plates to the body, and being roasted over a fire in an iron chair. Ten fell away as soon as they were accused, to the immense grief and consternation of all the brethren still at liberty, for these began to wonder if they themselves would be steadfast when their turn came. More were arrested every day, until practically all the fervent Christians were enduring the tortures, and many died in prison.

The governor had written to Caesar for instructions in regard to those who had the Roman citizenship, and Caesar answered that they should be beheaded, but if any renounced the Faith they should be dismissed. So at last the martyrs were put to death, those who were Roman citizens being beheaded and the rest thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre over a period of several days. A wonderful thing was that some of those who had before renounced Christ now confessed Him when they might have been dismissed for the asking, and were added to the company of the martyrs. (The letter describes at much length the behaviour of all the martyrs, how amidst all their torments they would not let the brethren call them by the honoured name of martyrs—"That title belongs to Christ, the true and faithful Martyr," they said, "and to those that died for Him; as for us, we are but ordinary confessors—pray for us that we may be made perfect and finish our course." Also they prayed for those that persecuted them, and above all they prayed for all the Christians who had fallen away through fear. "For they did not arrogate any superiority over the backsliders, but . . . exercised the compassion of mothers and poured forth many prayers to the father on their account. . . . Always lovers of peace, they departed to God, not leaving grief to their mother (the Church) or discord or dissensions to the brethren, but joy and peace, unanimity and love." The

letter mentions this point specially because some Christians were beginning to act in very unforgiving ways to those who fell away in persecution-time; this was notably the case in North Africa and issued in the heresy of the Montanists who broke away from Rome because they thought Rome treated the *lapsi* too mildly.)

Two of the martyrs specially described in the letter were **the slave-girl Blandina** and a boy of fifteen named Ponticus. Blandina's mistress was one of the martyrs herself, and she and the others were trembling lest through weakness Blandina might not be able to make a bold confession, or might even be frightened into giving false evidence. But "Blandina was filled with such power that her ingenious tormentors, who relieved and succeeded each other from morning till night, confessed that they were overcome and had nothing more that they could inflict upon her. Only amazed that she continued to breathe after her whole body was torn and pierced, they gave their testimony that one single kind of the torture inflicted was of itself sufficient to destroy life." In her torments she repeated over and over again, "I am a Christian—no wickedness is done amongst us", and nothing else could they wring from her. On the first day of the theatre-shows she "was bound and suspended on a stake, and thus exposed as food to the assaults of wild beasts, and as she thus appeared to hang after the manner of the cross, by her earnest prayers she impressed much alacrity into the contending martyrs (i.e. the others suffering in the arena). For as they saw her in the contest, with the external eyes, through their sister they contemplated Him that was crucified for them, to persuade those that believe in Him that everyone who suffers for Christ will for ever enjoy communion with the living God. But as none of the beasts then touched her, she was taken down from the stake and remanded back again to prison to be reserved for another contest."

After this Blandina and the boy Ponticus were brought to the amphitheatre every day to see the tortures of the others, and on the last day of the shows they, too, won their crown. "Force was also used to make them swear

by the idols; and when they continued firm and denied the pretended divinities, the multitude became outrageous at them, so that they neither compassionated the youth of the boy nor regarded the sex of the woman. Hence they subjected them to every horrible suffering and led them through the whole round of torture, ever and anon striving to force them to swear, but were unable to effect it. Ponticus, indeed, encouraged by his sister, so that the heathens could see that she was encouraging and confirming him, nobly bore the whole of these sufferings and gave up his life. But the blessed Blandina, last of all, as a noble mother that had animated her children and sent them as victors to the great King, herself retracing the ground of all the conflicts her children had endured, hastened at last, with joy and exultation at the issue, to them, as if she were invited to a marriage feast rather than to be cast to wild beasts. And thus after scourging, after exposure to the beasts, after roasting, she was finally thrown into a net and cast before a bull, and when she had been tossed by the animal, and had now no longer any sense of what was done to her by reason of her firm hope, confidence, faith and communion with Christ, she too was despatched. Even the Gentiles confessed that no woman among them had ever endured sufferings as many and great as these."

Persecution of Decius.

In the year 250 the Empire quite suddenly changed its attitude to the Church, and instead of punishing Christians only when they were denounced, a serious attempt was made to wipe out Christianity altogether. The Emperor Decius set to work on the defence and reorganisation of the Empire, and as a help to this he wanted to revive the old worship of the gods. But Christians had become very numerous (for there had been forty years of comparative peace), so he issued commands that all Bishops and priests should be put to death, and that all Christians whatsoever should be put to the test of offering sacrifice to the gods. A universal test of this kind was a new thing. Christians

were terror-stricken and large numbers gave way, leaving only the valiant ones to suffer the hardships of imprisonment, exile to the mines, torture, and death. The extreme rage of the persecution lasted eighteen months, when Decius was killed in the Gothic wars; but another Emperor renewed it for a while a few years later.

St. Cecilia (*date uncertain*).

It was somewhere about this time that St. Cecilia's martyrdom probably took place. She was one of the most honoured martyrs of the city of Rome itself, and her name is mentioned in the canon of the Mass. The story that is told about her is more like a legend than an account by eyewitnesses. (After the 300 years of persecution were ended, many *Acts* of the Martyrs were composed without pretending to be strictly fact all through, just as one might write a novel to-day about one of the actual English martyrs, after the manner of Fr. Benson's *Come Rack, Come Rope*. St. Cecilia's story is one of these, and it is hard to say how much is fact and how much decoration; but, in any case, the story gives us a true and vivid glimpse of Christian life in those days of persecution.)

Cecilia (the story tells us) belonged to a patrician family, one of the richest and most important in Rome; her father was a pagan, but her mother was a Christian. By the time Cecilia was seventeen she was thought of by the pagans as one of the most beautiful and gifted of noble Roman maidens, and by the Christians as an example of piety, virtue, and wisdom; both priests and people looked to her for encouragement and inspiration, while the poor thought of her with love and gratitude as their truest friend. But Cecilia cared little what anyone thought of her. She had long ago decided never to take her place of dignity among the Roman matrons or look for a moment at any noble suitor who should try to win her love: for she, like many other Christian maidens, had vowed her virginity to God. No one knew of this secret vow except her spiritual father, the holy old Bishop St. Urban.

Valerian Asks Cecilia's Hand in Marriage.—Meanwhile, a young pagan of high birth, equal to Cecilia's; rich, influential, and (what was better still) so upright and noble in his life that he might well have been an example to the Christians, fell in love with Cecilia, and asked her parents to give him their daughter in marriage. They were delighted, and agreed. Her parents' promise to Valerian caused Cecilia great distress of mind. For a time all seemed darkness. Our Lord seemed far away, and her guardian Angel, who had so often appeared to her and let her hear celestial music, no longer came to her. Broken-hearted, she fasted and prayed and did penance, begging our Lord to reveal His will. She dared not do anything to escape her parents' decision, or even tell them of her solemn vow and plead to be spared marrying Valerian, for something within her told her she must take no such steps, but trust to God.

Valerian, meanwhile, was very happy. He lived in a great house beyond the Tiber, with his twin-brother Tiburtius, whom he loved very much. Together they planned all that they would do to make Cecilia happy when she should come to rule their house.

The wedding-day drew near and still Cecilia was torn with doubts and fears. Then suddenly joy seemed to flood her soul, and her guardian Angel appeared to her, telling her all would be well, she need fear nothing; her vow would be safe.

The Wedding-Feast.—And so the day came when Valerian took Cecilia back to his home. There was a great feast, music and dancing and rejoicing. Cecilia in her rich robes and jewels looked more beautiful than ever. But her mind was far away; she scarcely heard the earthly music, for heavenly music was in her ears. One thought possessed her—she must tell Valerian about her holy religion and her vow.

So, as evening drew on and the guests carried on with their high revels, she called Valerian aside, saying she had something to say to him, but he must swear to tell no one. He gladly promised. Then she spoke wonderfully of her

religion, of the unseen world in which her soul lived, of God, of the Christian virtues and life of holiness, of the shining Angel who guarded her, and finally of her vow of chastity. Valerian was very astonished. At first he could not understand about the guardian Angel, and asked to see him. But Cecilia said he would not appear to an unbaptised pagan. And gradually, while she spoke, God's grace worked in Valerian, and he began to long to know more of these wonderful things that made Cecilia so happy, and that he had never even guessed about.

Valerian is Baptised.—So Cecilia explained to him how to find a certain meeting-place of the Christians, outside Rome, where he would find some poor people who, hearing he came from Cecilia, would take him to the Bishop Urban. Though it was already night and the guests departing, Valerian set out at once, as one spell-bound. Along the dark roads he passed and reached the Appian Way. Dawn was breaking when he reached the third milestone—the place Cecilia had described—and saw the opening to one of the Catacombs (the underground cemeteries where the Christians buried the martyrs and met together for Mass when they could). While he stood hesitating Urban himself came out. On hearing Valerian say he had been sent by Cecilia, the old Bishop raised his hands to God, and uttered aloud a long prayer of thanksgiving. When he had ended, a shining figure, none other than St. Paul, suddenly stood by them and bade Valerian read the golden words in the open book he held. They were the words of St. Paul's Epistle: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." The heavenly messenger asked him if he believed. Valerian had received the gift of faith as suddenly as the great Apostle himself, and cried with conviction, "I believe!" The vision vanished, and Urban led Valerian along the dark, mysterious corridors of the Catacombs, whose walls were lined with the tombs of the martyrs, and covered with symbolic devices and strange frescoes that as yet conveyed nothing to the bewildered young pagan. At last the holy

Bishop halted, and led Valerian into a little chapel. Seated before a low stone altar, on which burned a lamp before the Blessed Sacrament, he instructed his young neophyte in all the Christian mysteries, and then baptised him.

The Two Brothers are Martyred.—With such joy as he had never known Valerian returned to Cecilia. Her guardian Angel appeared then, and crowned them both (in token of the martyrdom they should suffer), and promised Valerian any favour he should ask. He asked the gift of faith for his twin-brother. It was granted, and Tiburtius, too, received baptism. So for three months Cecilia and the two young converts lived together in great joy. The brothers had become zealous Christians, and (disregarding the pagan authorities) used to collect the bodies of martyred Christians for burial. But this could not go on for long, because Christians of wealth and influence were specially marked out for persecution. Soon the two brothers were seized by the pagans, tried and condemned for being Christians, scourged with rods, and then executed. The authorities hastened to seize their wealth, but to their rage found it had all been made over to others for the use of poor Christians, while the house they had left to Cecilia. The officer who had been appointed to carry out the decree came to the house, but she spoke to him so movingly of Jesus Christ and His teaching that he listened spell-bound, and God gave him the gift of faith. The Bishop Urban was sent for, and a few days later this officer (Maximus), with all his family, relations, and dependants (to the number of 400) gathered together in Cecilia's house, where Urban instructed and baptised them. Maximus, too, was martyred.

The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia.—The Prefect, soon after, had her brought before him, and after a long trial condemned her to be suffocated by steam in the baths of her own house. She was led back and thrust into the baths, the furnaces being heated almost to bursting point, but the scalding steam had no effect upon her. After a night spent thus she was found peaceful and happy and unharmed. An executioner was then sent to the house. As

he raised his axe to strike off her head, the horror of his deed and her innocent beauty made his hand tremble, and the blow only wounded her. He struck again twice and then fled. St. Cecilia fell to the ground, still alive, her head only partly severed from her body. Thus she lay for three days and nights, while the Christians gathered round her in wonder. She smiled upon them, bade them hold fast to the Faith, made over the house to be a church, and gave all her goods to the poor. At last her "miraculous agony" came to an end, and her pure soul passed into God's glory.

Her large house became a Christian church, as she had wished, and hundreds of years afterwards her relics, and the relics of Valerian and Tiburtius and Maximus, too, were found in the Catacombs and moved by one of the Popes to the altar of the ancient Church o St. Cecilia.

St. Sebastian (*about* 304?).

The last and perhaps the fiercest persecution was in the time of Diocletian. By that time the Christians were so numerous as to be nearly half the population; they had built churches in many places; they were numerous in the army and in the Emperor's household. It seemed that the Empire had either to become Christian or to stamp out the Faith of Christ altogether; and Diocletian made a last effort to destroy the Church. Thousands of Christians suffered martyrdom, but the attempt failed, and the end of it was that Constantine became Emperor with the steady policy of making Christianity the religion of the State. As a representative of the martyrs of this period we can take St. Sebastian, though it must be understood that the details of his story are only to be found in those later *Acts* already referred to.

Not knowing that a brave young officer of the Imperial army, named Sebastian, was a Christian, the Emperor raised him to be the Captain of a company of the Imperial Guard, these being the body-guard of the Emperor when in Rome. Now Sebastian, a native of Narbonne, in

France, and a peace-loving man, had joined the Roman army on purpose to be able to win disciples for Christ, and reach pagan men who would otherwise never hear of the Catholic Faith. So he rejoiced at his promotion, and before long had made such good use of his opportunities that he had converted Chromatius, the Governor of Rome. The Governor, feeling that he could not keep his position and remain a good Catholic, made some excuse or other, and resigned it, retiring into the country. He wanted Sebastian to go with him, but the young Captain, knowing well it would mean martyrdom before long if he stayed, got Polycarp, a priest and good friend of his, to go instead. He himself stayed, secretly working for the Church, and doing great good. Here is a story of one of his victories or Christ :

Marcus and Marcellianus.—These two young men had been confined in a house, for their Faith, and were sentenced to death. Their parents, wives, and children were sent to plead with them to offer sacrifice to the gods and gain their freedom. The tears and pleading of those they loved so much was beginning to weaken the constancy of the two young men, when St. Sebastian came to their prison. His presence and words were so powerful, that not only were Marcus and Marcellianus given courage to resist to the end, but first their father, then their mother and their wives and children, were converted by his words and baptised : altogether sixty-eight people receiving the gift of faith through hearing him. St. Polycarp baptised them, and Sebastian was godfather to the men, and Beatrix (afterwards martyred) godmother to the women. Among the women was one called Zoe, the wife of the man in whose house the prisoners were confined. She was dumb, but, falling at the feet of St. Sebastian, she prayed to receive again the gift of speech. St. Sebastian made the sign of the Cross over her, and she was able to speak and glorify God. (Later she was arrested while praying at the tomb of the Apostle and roasted alive over a slow fire.) Her husband was also baptised. These are only a few among the many wonderful conversions that followed

on Sebastian's preaching, instruction, miracles, and shining example.

St. Sebastian's Martyrdom.—At last a traitor told the Emperor that Sebastian was a Christian. Being Captain of the Guard, Sebastian was not taken before the Prefect, but before the Emperor himself. Diocletian reproached him with being unfaithful, saying, "I have given thee a place amongst the first in my palace, and behold thou, in secret, hast been working against me and against the gods." And Sebastian, knowing that he had been as good a soldier of the Emperor as he had been of Christ, made answer: "Not so; I have prayed to God for thy salvation, and in my worship of Christ I have ever borne in mind the needs of thy Empire. I have adored the God who dwells in heaven, knowing that it was in vain to ask help of gods made of stone."

But the Emperor was angry, and ordered a cruel death for his brave and loyal Captain. At dawn he was taken to a field near the palace and tied to a tree. Then the Numidian archers shot at him, carefully avoiding any vital spot. When he was covered with arrows and bleeding from his many wounds, the soldiers departed, thinking he had bled to death.

Then Irene, a Christian woman, the wife of St. Castulus, went out to fetch in the body of the martyr and give it Christian burial. Untying it from the tree, she found Sebastian still breathed. She had him carried to her house, and nursed him back to life. On coming to himself, Sebastian was disappointed to find he was still on earth. He had been through all the agony of martyrdom without winning his martyr's crown and his rest and reward.

When he was well again he went boldly to the palace, and stood by a staircase where he knew the Emperor would pass by. The Emperor was filled with terror, thinking he was seeing a ghost. Sebastian reproached him with his cruel treatment of Christians who were his most faithful servants. When the Emperor found that it was no ghost, but Sebastian come back in flesh and blood, he had him

seized, and ordered that he should be taken to the circus of the palace and beaten to death with clubs. This was done, and his body thrown into the great sewer that ran through the city and emptied itself into the Tiber—out of reach, this time, so they thought, of the Christians. But St. Sebastian appeared to Lucina, a widow, and told her where his body was. So she went with some of her servants at dead of night and found it, and giving it Christian burial, prayed by the tomb for thirty days.

ST. BENEDICT (480-543) (AND THE MONKS)

The story of St. Benedict and his monks is the story of one of the most important things that have happened in the history of the Catholic Church. It is the story of how the *Roman Empire* was transformed into *Christendom.* Our Lord said His Church would be like leaven; and also like a grain of mustard seed, which grows up into a big tree and lodges all the birds of the air. In this story we see what He meant by those parables. And it is almost like another story of Creation; we see the power of God moving over real chaos—over the world in a dreadful state of misery, confusion, bloodshed, violence, poverty, famine, and wickedness. To understand the story of St. Benedict properly there are two things we must do: (1) Try and look at it from God's point of view and St. Benedict's at the same time; that is, see God working out His great plan, and see St. Benedict (still ignorant of God's great plan) walking step by step in the way he knew was right, though he never dreamed of all that it would lead to. For he had no idea of saving the ruined world or even of forming a great Order of monks; his only idea was to serve God as perfectly as he could in his own life. (2) The other point that we must bear in mind is that the story of St. Benedict and his monks is a very important bit of history; so that we must try and get a really true idea of what had been happening in the world for the last hundred years before he was born.

All the Western part of the Roman Empire had broken up. Even in the times of persecution—in the second century—the great Roman Empire had been cracking a little (especially between the Rhine and Danube) under the pressure of the barbarians outside.

Constantine staved off the disaster, and moved the capital to Constantinople; and in the East the Empire was able to last out many centuries. (Map wanted.) But the West was left to its own resources, and soon collapsed. The barbarians were taken wholesale into the army and the Empire; and the half-barbarian Generals quarrelled with each other just as they liked, and set up as rulers here and there. Italy, France, Spain, Britain, North Africa, fell lower and lower into confusion; there was more fighting than work, and civilisation was dying out. There was no settled government at all. Very often the Christian Bishops were the only people who had any sort of authority in a district.

St. Benedict's Childhood.

St. Benedict was the son of a rich man living in the Italian province of Umbria. He was born in Nursia, a small but fairly important town among the mountains. We can imagine the little boy and his twin-sister, Scholastica, living a happy life in their beautiful mountain home; taught the Catholic Faith from their earliest years; cared for not only by their father and mother, but by their faithful old nurse Cyrilla. St. Benedict was a quick and thoughtful boy, and later on proved himself very intelligent about his lessons, but with an independent spirit and ideas of his own: so we may guess that he took interest in the conversation of the visitors who came to his father's house sometimes and brought the news of the great world. He might have heard them recall how Alaric, a Roman General with his mostly barbarian army, had once actually marched into Rome and looted it (but that was seventy years before Benedict was born). He would surely have heard the dreadful stories of Attila, the "scourge of God", who swept through all Europe

with his savage Huns right up to the gates of Rome, where Pope Leo the Great had faced him bravely and persuaded him to turn back. He would certainly have heard of Odoacer, the Roman General with the barbarian name who had deposed the last Emperor of the West and was ruling Italy in Benedict's boyhood, and how (when Benedict was thirteen) Theodoric the leader of the Ostrogoths murdered Odoacer and made himself "King of Rome". Theodoric and his Ostrogoths were not Catholics nor pagans, but Arian heretics. The Roman Empire was hopelessly broken up and barbarianised, and it was to be five or six hundred years before it would be transformed into "Christendom"; but the people who were to do the actual work of building up Christendom out of the confusion were St. Benedict's Monks.

St. Benedict Goes to Rome.

When the boy Benedict had learned all his masters in Nursia could teach him, his father sent him to Rome with his old nurse Cyrilla. Here he entered with all his heart into his studies, and got on very fast, for he was a clever boy and cared much more for his books than for the amusements and revels the other boys and young men of Rome gave their hearts to. Also he was a good Catholic; and we are told had a great devotion to our Lady, kneeling every day before a fresco of her which was painted on the wall of his room, asking her to be his Mother and protect him. We may guess that he loved the solemn services that were held in all the big new churches that had been built since the Persecutions; and that he listened eagerly to the stories of the martyrs, and visited the Catacombs where their bodies lay. As he grew older he was appalled by the wickedness in the Christian city of Rome. As a boy in Nursia he had heard of the crimes and cruelty and low state of morals of the large colonies of barbarians who had gradually come to settle in the country part of Italy (as they had, in fact, all over the Empire). But among the civilised Romans, descended from men of a once noble, thought-

ful, and now Christian race, vice worse than that of the barbarians went on, without the good points of the barbarians. There was still much of the spirit of paganism even in Rome (and still plenty of real paganism left in country districts).

St. Benedict Leaves the World.

And so, as St. Benedict began to grow into a young man, he felt he could bear to live in this wicked world no longer; and even though it meant cutting himself off from his family, and giving up his studies and all the life of success and prosperity that seemed to be opening before him, he made up his mind to leave Rome and go out into the country, where he could become a monk and serve God in pureness of heart. He confided what he meant to do to his old nurse, and one day they set out secretly together.

Enfide, and the Miracle of the Broken Sieve.

Benedict and Cyrilla after a while reached a little mountain village called Enfide. The poor peasants were kind to them, and let them live in a little house near the church and supplied their needs, and here they lived for some time, Benedict spending much of his time in the church, absorbed in prayer. It was now that a little incident happened that seemed to Cyrilla to show that God was pleased with Benedict's choice about leaving Rome, and to show that he was chosen and called by God to this life, and not a mere runaway schoolboy, as the world would have judged. One day Cyrilla broke an earthenware sieve lent her by the villagers. In distress, she began to weep over the mishap. Benedict coming in, and thinking only of comforting his old nurse, took up the two halves of the sieve, and kneeling down with them outside the house, prayed fervently to the Heavenly Father, who sees and knows all our smallest needs. When he arose the sieve was whole, and he returned it to Cyrilla. The villagers, hearing of the miracle, decided they had a young Saint in their midst, and hung up the sieve in the church.

Distressed at this and feeling convinced that God wanted him to seek yet greater solitude, Benedict decided to set out once more, this time without telling his old nurse. It must have cost him a good deal, for Cyrilla was like a mother to him, and also he knew the sorrow his sudden disappearance would cost her. Still God was asking him to "leave all". So one day he set out alone along the rough mountain paths.

St. Benedict Becomes a Monk.

He set off with the idea of serving God better by becoming a perfect monk; but the idea of a perfect monk that he had in his mind was not the idea we have now, and, in fact, it was quite different from the idea he was to have himself a few years later. There were already many monks in all parts of the Christian world, and in their different ways they all copied the way of life that had been started in Egypt 200 years before by the Fathers of the Desert, especially St. Antony, the "Father of Monks". St. Antony himself had spent twenty years in solitude, and afterwards acted as head of thousands of holy men who were living as hermits in the Egyptian desert. From Egypt the idea spread to Syria and Italy and everywhere. Sometimes the monks lived quite apart, and sometimes for convenience they came together for meals and prayers; but it was not the custom to have a Superior with proper authority. The great idea of this older sort of monks was to live each in his own cave, and to rival each other in enduring as much discomfort and suffering as possible—loneliness, silence, heat and cold, long fasting and little sleep, rough garments, scourgings, and all kinds of extraordinary penances. It came to be thought that the most perfect monk was the one who kept most apart from all others and performed the hardest penances. Each for himself was the idea, and each tried to go one better than his brethren. At least the good ones did; but as a matter of fact what was really happening everywhere was that the very hard rule (too hard for human nature), and the impossible and unnatural idea of what a perfect monk

should be, was so discouraging, that many monks gave up trying altogether, and some monasteries became "relaxed"—slack in discipline, poor in ideals, and empty of all devotion.

So when St. Benedict left Rome with the idea of "serving God alone", his idea of doing this was the same idea of perfection held by all religious people of the time. We shall see now how God helped him to follow it up and then go on, through it, into something better.

The Cave at Subiaco.

So as St. Benedict climbed the rocky mountain paths he was happy in the sense that he was really setting forth in God's service. He had pressed on for some hours when he saw a man coming towards him, dressed in the habit of a monk. This man, Romanus, was at first surprised to see a noble boy alone in this wild place, but after a little conversation with him he felt sure that St. Benedict had heard a special call from God. Ready to help him obey it Romanus led Benedict up the mountain, climbing rocks and crags, pressing through the rough undergrowth, until at last he showed him the mouth of a cave. There was a little ledge in front of it, from which descended a precipice, the rocky cliff rising sheer above it. The cave was about twelve feet deep and six feet wide. St. Benedict entered it with joy—here, at last, was the very place he was seeking! Romanus gave him a monk's sheepskin habit, promised to keep his secret, and undertook to supply him with food. This he could do without disturbing the young hermit's solitude, for the monastery in which he lived was on the top of the cliff which towered above the cave. He promised to let down food in a basket, a bell attached to the rope, so that Benedict would know when the basket was being let down. Then he went away and left the boy alone.

The cave was bare—Benedict had no bed, no covering, no books, there was no door to the cave to protect him from the weather. But, knowing that this was just what the Egyptian monks would have thought a perfect place

to live in, St. Benedict set himself to bear the hardships, and gave himself up to prayer. And surely God helped him to live this strange life, and sent him spiritual consolations to make up to him for having "left all" so thoroughly for the love of God.

Three years went by like this. We do not know what passed through St. Benedict's mind—whether God spoke to him in some wonderful way, or whether he thought over all he had experienced in the world and arrived at some ideas of how he could help others besides himself. Anyhow, when the time came, he seemed quite ready to take the next step. But he had still one experience to go through in his solitude before he should be ready to receive the disciples with whom he was to build up Christendom. It was on an Easter Sunday that a neighbouring priest came to him, bringing him Easter fare (according to a command he had received from God in a dream). They ate together and talked of spiritual things, and then the priest went away. Shepherd folk now made their way to the cave, and seeing St. Benedict in his rough sheepskin, thought it was some animal. But he rose from his prayer, and spoke to them so wonderfully of God that they went away and made known what a holy man of God there was out there in a cave; and before long all kinds of people from round about had come to St. Benedict to ask his help and prayers and consolation and advice. He listened to their sad stories, and sent them away full of new courage and penitence and hope and desire to serve God. But now he was to have a time of trial himself. During these three years he had grown from a boy into a man. He had come out into the mountains scarcely knowing what he did—"driven by the Spirit". He had not yet made any *vow* to leave the world. It was time he faced the question squarely. And so God allowed him to be tempted.

Perhaps the sight of other human beings broke the spell that by God's grace had held the boy rapt in the things of the spirit so long. Memories of the past woke up vividly in his mind. Nature strove with grace. To

deny himself, to give up all that an ordinary human existence offered, seemed too hard a thing. His whole being was shaken, his mind and soul tormented. But Christ in him conquered. St. Benedict then and there chose for ever the harder way, and prayed for grace to follow it faithfully. Then, to impress very strongly on his mind and heart, body and soul, that these hard ways alone were to be sought and loved, he did something that may seem very extravagant. Flinging aside his habit, he threw himself into a thicket of mountain brambles, so that the thorns pierced and tore his flesh. And he arose from it joyful and strong, never again to be tempted to give up the life he had been called to.

He had learnt now that to fly from the world was not everything, for he could not fly from himself. And perhaps it made him realise that, after all, human nature could not be left out of account. Solitude, a rough cave, and a habit did not make a monk—two other things were necessary : sincere prayer for God's grace, and some real, reasonable rule of life and way of self-discipline. And now that he had learnt his lesson fully, God sent him the men whom he was to train according to the ideas he had learnt to understand.

The First Twelve Monasteries.

From among the men who had come to seek St. Benedict's help and advice gradually a kind of little colony of disciples settled around him, putting themselves under his guidance. Feeling that it would be better for these men not to live as hermits in lonely caves, but to live together, in little families, as it were, with one over them like their father, he gathered them together in groups of twelve, appointing a Superior over each group, while he himself filled the place of Abbot over all of them : and so the first Benedictine monasteries were formed.

About St. Benedict's Great Family at Subiaco.

As time went on, more and more men came and put themselves under St. Benedict's guidance, and soon the

mountain of Subiaco became a great monastic settlement—some of the monasteries high up on the hill, others down on the shores of the lake. But before we get on to the stories that belong to this time, we must understand something about the way of life of these monks. For though St. Benedict had not yet written his great Rule, he was training his disciples in a special way.

St. Benedict's Idea.*

We need not *guess* what was in St. Benedict's mind, for he tells us in his own words in the Prologue of his Rule: "We are going to establish a School of God's Service, in which we hope we shall establish nothing harsh, nothing burthensome." And in other parts of the Rule he makes it clear that he is giving his monks a way of life that shall not be too hard for human nature to carry out quite faithfully and fully. So we see that he had quite left the old idea of following the Fathers of the Desert. Of course, his monks had many hardships (including fasting, etc.), but "in those matters St. Benedict's régime was no more than was often imposed on Christians living in the world". St. Benedict knew that he was asking much less of his monks than other Abbots did, for he calls his Rule "a very little rule for beginners".

Another new idea of St. Benedict's was that the monks should really and truly live together as a family, and not think it more perfect to go away and be solitary hermits, or to be different from the rest and have special fasts and mortifications. They ate together, slept in dormitories, and especially met many times through the day and during the night, to say the Divine Office and pray in common. To make of each monastery a real family, the monks had to add to their ordinary three vows a vow of stability, which bound them always to stay in the monastery where they were professed, and not wander off from one monastery to another (as used to be the custom).

* The following is taken from Chapter III. of *Benedictine Monachism*, by Abbot Butler, O.S.B.

The monks did not become monks with the idea of doing any special kind of work for God or for mankind (as people do who join the modern Orders—to be missionaries or teachers, or to plead for the world by prayer and penance). Their idea was just to be good monks—live a simple life of daily work and prayer as perfectly as possible, with the idea of pleasing God as their first thought. They wanted to live just as our Lord had commanded in the Gospels, and as it was really impossible to do that in the world in those disturbed days, they went apart and lived together, having as little to do with the wicked world as they could. And the result was a wonderful spirit of peaceful happiness and content, of love, of holiness, of prayer, and the monks became simple, sincere, humble men, thorough in their work, unselfish in their lives, true followers of Christ, the perfect Man.

Some Stories.

St. Benedict had had an unpleasant experience when he was called to rule a large, relaxed monastery of the old type of monks, who tried to poison him because they did not like the way of life he imposed on them, and he had returned to his own monks. Now he found it was necessary to go to Rome to get the Pope's approval of what he was doing, and also to get priests, and furniture for the altars, and books, and all that was needed for his big family. He stayed two years in Rome, and a community of monks formed itself round him there. The fame of him had spread abroad, and many great and good men came to speak with him. When he returned to Subiaco some great men from Rome went out to visit him, and were so struck with the holy lives of the monks, that two of them sent their two young sons, Maurus (aged twelve) and Placid (aged seven) to be brought up as monks. And from that time these Benedictine families always had their children—little boy monks (not merely there to be educated) who took their place among the grown-up monks in the refectory and choir, and had no special master (out of school-time), but were looked after by the monk who

happened to be sitting next them. They loved the Abbot as if he was their father, and the other monks like their big brothers, and grew up holy and happy, till they took their vows and became complete monks. There are special bits of the Rule about these boys, how they must not fast, but eat all they need (even meat), and how a monk must take them out to the fields to play; and how, if they have to be punished, it must never be done by a monk who gets angry or impatient. St. Benedict loved Maurus and Placid as if they had been his own two little boys. Here are two stories about them (and they also show St. Benedict's personal care for his monks):

The monks of three monasteries near the top of a mountain suffered for want of water, having to carry up what they needed from the lake below. Some of them complained to their ever-sympathetic Father. St. Benedict told them to cheer up, and he would see what could be done. That night he called Placid to come with him, and they went together secretly a little farther up the rocky mountain-side. Then St. Benedict knelt and prayed, and told Placid to place three stones on the spot. The next day the monks found the rocks already moist, and as soon as they began digging, a splendid little stream gushed forth and was enough to water all the monasteries. Another miracle in which Placid was involved was the time he himself fell into the lake and began to drown. St. Benedict, who was in his cell reading, became aware of the fact and sent Maurus to help his little friend. Placid had been carried some way from the bank, but Maurus somehow got to him, seized him by the hair, and dragged him to shore; then, to his surprise, found his clothes were dry, and he had walked on the water.

Thirty-five years were spent by St. Benedict in Subiaco, and then to the sorrow of his monks he decided to leave them, owing to the persecutions of a jealous neighbour, who not only attempted to murder St. Benedict, but (which he minded much more) did all he could to harm the monks. Our Lord comforted St. Benedict, and told him that very special work awaited him elsewhere, and

that He would always be with him and protect him. And so St. Benedict bade farewell to the spot he loved so much.

Monte Cassino.

Of course, the monks at Subiaco were broken-hearted to lose their beloved Father, and his being forced to go seemed like a tragedy. But really it was only the next stage of God's plan. For after a journey of some fifty miles St. Benedict and his party of monks reached a mountain, rising sheer up out of the plain like a great watch-tower, midway between Rome and Naples, and climbing to the top of it, they decided to settle there. This became the true home of the great Benedictine Order that gradually developed.

And now two things happened that were the little beginning of two great works done all through the world by St. Benedict's monks. On the top of the mountain was a temple of Apollo. St. Benedict destroyed this, and built in its place a Catholic Church. And he set to work and preached day after day to the peasants who lived on that mountain, and who still belonged to the old pagan religion of Rome. He went from village to village until he had converted and baptised all the people. Later on his monks were to do that throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

Meanwhile, they were busy hewing wood and stone, and building a great monastery. And that, too, is what they were to do everywhere, for the next thousand years —making clearances in the forests, draining and tilling the land, making bridges and roads, and settling down in the monasteries they had built.

Several miracles happened during this building of the monastery. A wall fell on one of the little boys and killed him. His crushed and broken little body was laid on a sack and carried to St. Benedict, who, when he had been left alone with it, prayed, and the boy was restored to life.

As soon as the building was finished the monks began

to live their regular life. It was now that St. Benedict wrote his great Rule. Many wonderful stories are told of St. Benedict at this time: how he could read the thoughts of his monks and other people; how he cowed more than one of the cruel Generals who led the armies of fierce soldiers who were still doing such damage in Italy. When he went again to Rome Bishops and Abbots travelled from far to see him, and to learn his way of training monks, and then they went back to their monasteries to order them according to St. Benedict's Rule.

Meanwhile, women wanted to live this holy and peaceful life, far from the worry and wickedness of the world. So St. Benedict sent for his sister, Scholastica, and made her abbess of his first foundation for women, which was the beginning of Orders of nuns (for before there had only been consecrated virgins and anchoresses, and such-like). And that brings us to the last story of St. Benedict we have space for.

The Last Meeting of the Brother and Sister—St. Benedict's Death.

Once a year St. Benedict would go and see his sister, and they would be happy talking together of all that filled their lives. It was the last time they were to meet. They had become so absorbed in conversation that they did not notice the day had drawn to a close. Presently St. Benedict got up and said he must go. St. Scholastica pleaded with him to stay, that they might spend the night talking of the things of God and His kingdom. But St. Benedict would not agree. Without saying more, St. Scholastica bowed her head on her hands on the table and prayed. As she raised her head a terrible storm burst, so violent that there could be no question of St. Benedict going away. "May Almighty God forgive you, sister," he said, "what have you done?" And sweetly his sister made answer: "I asked you, and you refused me; I asked the Lord, and He heard me." And so they

joyfully spent the night talking of all that was in their two holy hearts.

Three days after, St. Scholastica died, and in the same year St. Benedict told his monks that on March 21 he would be taken from them. For some days he suffered much from a fever, and on the day he had foretold he bade them to carry him to the chapel. There, supported by two of his monks, he received Holy Communion; and as he prayed, thanking his God for coming to him once again, God took him to Himself.

How St. Benedict's Order was Like the "Mustard Seed", and His Monks "Like Leaven".

St. Benedict died without having any idea of what his monks were to do for the world. All he knew was that he had established "a school of God's service", had become the father of a great family of men and women who, in a world of bloodshed and licence, were living pure and happy lives, working just enough to support themselves, not wishing for power or importance, "not more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but wise unto sobriety". As far as we know, he only established one other monastery besides Subiaco and Monte Cassino.

But he had done something much greater than if he had worked out some great organisation, or system of missionaries or workers or teachers. He had taught men to be Christians through and through, and quite simply and thoroughly, and after he was dead his Rule went on doing its work and his peaceful spirit inspiring those who followed him. The Roman Emperors of old had conquered the world. They had ruled it by the principle of *might is right* and civilised it by a wonderful organising power, by riches, by the work of slaves, by the help of soldiers. Then their power had grown weak and faded away, and in the world they had conquered and civilised there was, of course, worse confusion and wickedness than if they had left it just a wild forest full of tribes and families of savages. Then into the Emperor's

place stepped the Pope. It was his task to set the civilised world to rights again, and turn the Empire into Christendom. But "*might is right*" was not his principle; he had no wealth or soldiers, and the tangle had got too bad for any mere organising power to be able to straighten it out. What he needed was *leaven*—real, little live bits of the Mystical Body of Christ to settle down in every part of the now lawless and devastated Empire and gradually leaven the lump. And that is exactly what the monks were, and just what happened.

At Rome St. Gregory had adopted St. Benedict's Rule, and turned his great monastery of St. Andrew into a Benedictine monastery. When he became Pope he sent forth parties of monks (the first of these monasteries established in distant parts of which there is any historical record is the one St. Augustine founded in England in 600). Everywhere the monks went forth and settled themselves peaceably down, and just *lived Christ*—and the leaven worked. They did not do any *special* work: they had first to make their monastery, and then by farming and any other work that came to hand earn their own living. And then they turned and looked after the poor, and strangers, and heathen, and children, and the sick, and everyone that Christ said His followers must treat as if they were Himself. And everywhere men of good-will who wanted peace, and to be pure and holy, joined up and became monks, too.

Once the real Christian life was being *lived,* the Church could gradually pull everything together. The Empire turned into Christendom and Rome ruled again, but now with spiritual power.

BLESSED MARGARET CLITHEROW

(The Tudor Persecutions)

The Changes of Religion.

The English people did not turn Protestant suddenly. They were *robbed* of the Faith by the Tudor monarchs, and it took a hundred years. In 1530 all England was Catholic and in communion with the Holy See; by 1630 the whole country was thoroughly Protestant, with only a few Catholics practising the persecuted Faith in secret. The changes had been very gradual. Henry VIII broke away from the Pope over his divorce, and made himself the Head of the Church in England, executing everyone who resisted. Then out of greed for wealth he suppressed the monasteries which were the powerful strongholds of the Church all over the kingdom.

There was a great revolt in the North—the Pilgrimage of Grace—but it was put down by treacherous promises, and when the rebels had demobilised thousands of them were hanged.

But Henry VIII did not introduce the Protestant *doctrines* that were already making progress in Germany; in fact, he burned those who taught them in England.

It was during the reign of the young Edward VI that the Government became thoroughly Protestant and enforced the Book of Common Prayer instead of the Mass and suppressed the Catholic Guilds in which the laity were organised. Again the English common people revolted in Devonshire, Norfolk, and the Midlands, but they were easily defeated by foreign professional troops, and once more thousands of them were hanged.

Then came the five years of Queen Mary, who restored the Catholic religion and reunited the country to Rome. But it was too late to remedy all the evil; there were now many genuine Protestants, especially in London, and they were determined to get the upper hand again. Mary

was forced to repress them, but she made a mistake by reviving the old death penalty (by burning) for heresy. Two hundred and seventy-seven heretics were burned. Also she married the King of Spain, and the people did not like that.

Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) reigned forty-five years, and all that time she and her clever Ministers were working hard to establish the Protestant Church of England and make everybody belong to it. But at this point we can best see what was happening if we follow the life of one of our English martyrs—Blessed Margaret Clitherow.

Margaret Clitherow's Childhood.

She was born in York in the last years of Queen Mary (about 1556). Her parents had given up the Faith, or at any rate gave it up when Elizabeth came to the throne, so Margaret (like practically all the other English children) was brought up to go to the Protestant services. She did not realise that England had been robbed of the true Faith, but she must have heard much talk and discussion of the religious changes. Just before she was born the Protestant Bishop Hooper had been burned in the space opposite the great west doors of York Minster: everybody remembered that. Everybody remembered, too, how (when Margaret was still a baby and Elizabeth began to reign) the Catholic Archbishop Heath had been seen no more in York and was shut up in the Tower of London (and there he died twenty years after); and how the crucifixes and all the other Catholic things were done away with from the Minster, and the chilly Protestant services came back. But there were still many people who remained Catholics when Margaret was a small girl; you knew who they were because they never went to church. It was against the law to stay away, but for a while they were not bothered much.

But when Margaret was about twelve years old there was much more to talk about. The Catholic Queen of Scots had fled from the Scotch Protestants into England, and Queen Bess had put her in prison (1568). Then next

year came the exciting news of a Catholic rising in the North: Mass had been sung once more in Durham Cathedral; Earl Percy was marching down on York with a Catholic army, under the old banner of the Five Wounds that had been raised in the Pilgrimage of Grace. But he never reached York after all; and soon there came terrifying stories of the hanging of hundreds of the rebels—a gallows in every village. More excitement when the news came (1570) that the Pope had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth and absolved Catholics from allegiance; the Bull had actually been nailed to the door of St. Paul's in London by a bold Catholic named Felton, who had cheerfully paid the penalty by torture and death, forgiving the Queen on the scaffold and sending her his diamond ring, and calling on the name of Jesus in his last moments. People wondered what would come of the excommunication—would the Pope send an army to England? But nothing happened. A few Catholics were put to death in London, and things went on much as usual. People said the Catholic religion was sure to die out by degrees, because there were not many priests left and none coming to take their place. They had not heard of the college that Cardinal Allen had started at Douay, in Flanders, where young Englishmen were already studying to be priests so that they would come back to England and keep the Faith alive.

Her Conversion.

Margaret was only about sixteen when she was married to a rich tradesman of York named John Clitherow (1571). He belonged to a Catholic family, but he was easygoing and safety-loving, and he lived as a Protestant. The next year there was a great event in York—the execution of Blessed Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who had led the rising three years before (he had been betrayed and sold to Elizabeth by the Scotch). On the scaffold he made a speech saying that he was dying in the Catholic Faith of the whole Church, "but as for this new Church of England, I do not acknowledge it" (he had been

offered his life if he would turn Protestant). Then he kissed the scaffold, and said, "Lord, receive my soul", and was beheaded; and a great groan like thunder burst from all the people, who wept and called on God to receive his soul into eternal rest. Perhaps Margaret was in the crowd; at any rate, she heard all about it: and perhaps it helped to lead her to the true Faith; anyhow, we find that after another year or two she had learned all about Catholicism from her husband's Catholic relatives (he had a brother a priest), and had become a Catholic herself. Her husband allowed her to do as she pleased about it, and to bring up their children as Catholics, too.

Her Work for the Priests.

Young Mistress Clitherow—not yet twenty—threw herself into the Catholic cause with all her heart and soul. Several times she was sent to prison for not attending the Protestant Church; once she remained in prison for two years. But her sufferings only made her more loyal. Before long there came a splendid opportunity of doing something for our Lord and His Church, and she seized it joyfully. The new seminary priests ordained at Douay were beginning to come back to England and go about secretly through many dangers, for the Government soon realised that the new priests were putting fresh life into the Catholics and did their best to hunt them down; it was already high treason to reconcile anyone to the Church, and soon it was made high treason even to say Mass. So the priests from abroad travelled about secretly, carrying their lives in their hands. Margaret Clitherow kept two rooms ready, one in her house and one in the town, where she could hide priests who were staying in York or passing through on their perilous journeys, and where she could gather a few Catholics together to Mass.

The persecution got worse year by year, and at last (during the excitement caused by the coming of the Jesuits and the capture and martyrdom of Fr. Campion) three of Margaret's own priests were caught and hanged,

drawn, and quartered at York (1582). She herself—like most of those destined to win a martyr's crown—had a great longing to die for the Faith. Often on dark nights she would steal through the streets, walking barefoot as if on a holy pilgrimage to the lonely hill on the road (outside Micklegate Bar) where the gallows stood, and where the blood of her martyrs had been shed; and here in the lonely darkness she would pray that if it were God's will she, too, might make the sacrifice of her life.

In 1585 an Act of Parliament made the harbouring of priests an offence punishable by death. When Margaret heard this she was afraid her confessor would not allow her to do it any longer. But, seeing how her heart was set on this bit of service, he let her have her way. She was overjoyed, and cried, "Now by God's grace all priests shall be more welcome to me than ever they were, and I will do what I can to set forward God's Catholic Service".

"Then you must needs prepare your neck for the rope", said her confessor, smiling. And Margaret replied, "God's will be done, but I am far unworthy of that honour".

The Martyr's Crown.

For nearly two years all went successfully, though the dangers were always increasing, for the Government was untiring in its efforts to track down the priests. It was known that the King of Spain was preparing an immense Armada to attack England; and the Government pretended to think that the priests from Douay came to plot against the Queen, though as a matter of fact they left politics strictly alone and attended to spiritual matters only. But the time for Margaret's passion came at last, and one day in 1586 the sheriff's men arrived suddenly to search the house. There were at the moment two priests hiding in it—one newly arrived, the other acting as tutor to the children. The first Margaret managed to hide in the cellar, and he escaped; the other was giving lessons to the children. One of the searchers opened the door

suddenly, and although the priest was, of course, disguised in layman's clothes, the man guessed he was a priest from the fact that he was teaching. He hurried away to call his companions, and meanwhile the priest escaped by a secret way which led from the house to the priest's room outside, where he was lodging.

The sheriff then seized Margaret and her children and servants, and cast them into separate prisons. When she was accused of maintaining "enemies to Her Majesty" she denied the accusation, knowing that priests were no such thing. When she was asked what form of trial she would have she cheerfully replied, "Having made no offence, I need no trial". Had she asked for a fair trial and pleaded not guilty, she would very likely have got off. But two things made her determined to suffer anything rather than have a trial: First, she knew that her husband and children would be called up to give evidence as to whether she had harboured priests. She wished to spare them the awful remorse that would be theirs should she be condemned to die on their evidence. Secondly, she knew that her husband, being a Protestant, might easily be led on at the trial to give away the names of the priests they had sheltered. The alternative (the penalty for refusing to plead) was to suffer a sentence so horrible that it seems almost incredible, even for those cruel days. "You must return from whence you came", it ran, "and there, in the lowest part of the prison, be stripped naked, laid down, your back upon the ground, and as much weight laid upon you as you can bear, and so continue three days without meat or drink, except a little barley bread and puddle water, and the third day be pressed to death, your hands and feet bound to posts, and a sharp stone under your back." Calmly, peacefully, Margaret listened to her sentence, saying quietly, "If this judgment be according to your own conscience, I pray God send you better judgment before Him. I thank God heartily for this." The judge urged her to change her mind, to submit to trial. But she chose rather to suffer this death than risk temptation for her own family

and danger for the priests. We cannot imagine her sufferings. The final agony lasted fifteen minutes, and through all her courage never failed, so that the Protestants who stood by said, "Surely this woman receiveth comfort from the Holy Ghost".

The sheriff had tried hard to make her admit she was to die for treason. But she answered clear and firm, "No, no, Mr. Sheriff, I die for the love of my Lord Jesus".

And what of her children? Perhaps the thought of them cost her as much as any of the bodily pain she had to suffer. Her little twelve-year-old daughter, Anne, was questioned, but as she refused to give any information about her mother, she, too, was cast into prison. They tried to force her to go to the Protestant services, and when she stoutly refused they beat and ill-treated her. Then they told her that if she refused to go to a sermon they would kill her mother. She fell into the trap, and went. Afterwards they told her that her mother had already been killed. After some time in prison she managed to escape to Belgium, where she became a nun, while her two brothers became priests. And surely God took especially tender care of them, for the sake of the brave mother of whom He had asked so great a sacrifice for love of Him.

The Penal Times.

These days were only the beginning of a long period of unbroken persecution in England. Two years after Margaret Clitherow's martyrdom the Spanish Armada came and was defeated. Catholics were loyal enough to the Queen, but that did not save them from redoubled persecution in the national panic. Many were put to death, and the rest were imprisoned or reduced to poverty by systematic fines.

So it went on for another 200 years, until Catholics were so few and feeble that it seemed hardly worth while to persecute them any more. Through all those dark times the Faith was kept alive in England by the constant succession of seminary priests ordained abroad (nearly

300 of these were put to death in all), and by the courage and devotion of a few Catholic families whose country-houses were almost the last stronghold of the Faith.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

(The Missionaries)

The Missionary on Foot.

In the early centuries of the Church it is easy to see how Catholics carried out our Lord's command to go and teach all nations, and there are plenty of examples—like St. Patrick and St. Boniface—of great missionaries who converted whole regions to Christ. During the Middle Ages "foreign missions" were not much in evidence, for the difficulties of travel were so great and Christendom was so hemmed in by the completely hostile Mohammedan world that little or nothing could be done. The desire was always there, and now and then some adventurous soul would penetrate into strange, far-distant lands to carry the Gospel, but nothing much came of it. St. Francis of Assisi himself failed when he went to preach to the Saracens in Palestine.

The Age of the Sailors. (Map of the World wanted here.)

But at the close of the fifteenth century the development of the sailing-ship suddenly threw open unknown worlds. Merchants and traders were anxious to find new sea-ways to the East: the ships of Genoa and Venice became more and more adventurous, and at last Columbus (a Genoese) discovered America for Spain (1492). Then the Portuguese Vasco da Gama got round Africa to India (1497), and another Portuguese, Magellan, was the first that got into the Pacific and sailed round the world. By that time Portugal had quite a little empire in the East Indies, and Spain had an unlimited field of conquest in South and Central America. Both these countries were anxious to

make the natives Christian, and encouraged the missionaries who followed the explorers; but too often the efforts of the missionaries were spoilt by the bad example and cruelties of the Christian colonists. In America the Dominicans, especially a priest named Las Casas, worked hard to save the natives from the oppression of the Spanish settlers. But that is another story. Our business is with **St. Francis Xavier,** who was the first missionary to plan his enterprises on a great scale in the vast new world which the sailors had opened out, and to conceive the idea of adding whole continents to the Kingdom of Christ. He did not succeed in achieving all he aimed at, but his romantic raid on Asia struck the imagination of the Church as nothing else could have done, and ever since his time Catholics have felt that they must not be content until what he attempted is accomplished. We shall see how in the case of Xavier it was a special personal vocation, an impulse of the *heart,* that drew him to the work; and, indeed, it seems always so all through the missionary history of the Church—the work of bringing the heathen to Christ is always done by some *individual* Catholic whose heart is moved by the thought of their need; something like our Lord Himself was when for two days He preached to the Samaritans (see Matt. xv. 24; John iv. 40).

He Joins the Society.

St. Francis Xavier was a brilliant and ambitious scholar at the University of Paris when the still unknown St. Ignatius Loyola arrived there, poorly clad, leading a donkey, his books and few belongings in its pack, and (though a man of nearly forty) put himself to school with the little boys to learn the rudiments of Latin grammar. Francis, the eloquent and learned young master, thoroughly despised this fellow-countryman of his, though he knew well St. Ignatius was as highly born as he, and had been a brave and honourable soldier for many years. But St. Ignatius had something more than high birth in this world—he had been "born again" of the Spirit of

God, and was still all on fire with this new glory. And though he had laid down his sword and knightly spurs, he was now setting forth as captain of the "Company of Jesus". And being a reader of men's hearts, he saw the true gold beneath Francis Xavier's ambitions and haughty spirit, and he decided to win him for his Company. And so he did. The day came when there was no man who loved St. Ignatius more, or was more full of enthusiasm for the Society of Jesus, than Francis; more poor and humble, self-sacrificing and obedient, and yet full of spiritual joy and the adventurous spirit of a soldier of Jesus Christ. He longed, above all, to be sent to the Indies to carry the Catholic Faith to the ancient peoples now brought for the first time in touch with Christendom through trade and conquest. For a long time he kept his desire as the secret of his own heart, and tried in all things to live perfectly the life of hardship, poverty, self-sacrifice, and devotion of the little Company of which he was a member. The idea of going to the Holy Land in pilgrimage, and there preaching to the infidels, had, after a year's waiting, come to nothing, and St. Ignatius had put himself and his followers at the command of the Pope.

Chosen for the Indies.

It was then that a Portuguese official, Govea, an old enemy of St. Ignatius who had been won over to be a true friend of his and of the Society, advised the King of Portugal that if he wanted missionaries for his colonies he could not possibly do better than get the services of these learned and yet humble, holy, and zealous men. The King of Portugal appealed to the Pope; the Pope gave orders and St. Ignatius chose two of his Company—but Francis Xavier was not among them. Here was the great desire of his heart all unexpectedly offered to the Society, and then after all he was not chosen! We can be sure that so entirely humble and brave a heart took the disappointment perfectly. Maybe it was that that got him the great graces that later raised him to his

place among the Apostles and " wonder-workers " of the Church.

The two Fathers chosen were Rodriguez and Bobadilla. Rodriguez started at once by sea for Lisbon. Bobadilla was waiting to go with the Ambassador, and before the day to start arrived he had fallen ill. St. Ignatius looked at his remaining disciples to see whom he should send instead of Bobadilla, and picked on Francis. With joy he received the order, and hurried off to get the Pope's blessing, as the Ambassador was starting the very next day. As the Pope looked at this humble, poorly-clad priest kneeling at his feet, he recognised in him the burning heart of a great missionary, and he felt sure wonderful things would result from his mission.

And so Francis reached the Portuguese Court, where he became so beloved by all that for some time it seemed as if the King would never let him go. But at last it was decided that Rodriguez should be the one to stay in Portugal (where the Fathers were badly needed), and that St. Francis should sail with the new Governor-General of the Indies, who was going out to take possession.

The Voyage to India.

We can hardly imagine what the voyage out to distant lands in those days meant, in hardships and suffering and tediousness and sickness. It took many months to reach India in the great, slow-moving caravels. Most of the space was taken up with barrels of water and provisions, and the crew (largely made up of ruffians and adventurers) had to shift as best they could for quarters. As to the Government officials, their cabins were so narrow and low that they could hardly turn round in them. During part of the voyage the crew and passengers would suffer from the tropical heat and terrible storms, then again from cold winds blowing from the South Pole. Sometimes they would get becalmed, and roll at anchor for forty days, when food and water would grow scarce, and disease break out. And there was the continued dread of pirates, cyclones, wrecks on reefs and shoals, and risk

of fire breaking out. Often the provisions would go bad, and the water become foul and brackish. Such was the kind of voyage St. Francis faced with a gay heart as he embarked on the *Santiago*. There were 1,000 men on board, including the Governor, Martin Alfonso di Sousa, who was prepared to treat St. Francis as an honoured passenger. But St. Francis refused to eat at his table, feeding on whatever scraps he could beg (though he accepted the dish sent him every day by the Governor, so as to give it to the sick). He accepted a cabin, and turned it into a tiny hospital, while he himself slept on a corner of the deck with a coil of rope for a pillow. He passed his time among the crew, whose coarse jests, blasphemous language, rude and boorish manners, quarrelling, and lack of all charity and courtesy, were far from what St. Francis had been used to. And for the first two months he suffered terribly from sea-sickness. But he was determined to change all that was evil on that ship before the voyage was over; and, sure enough, he did. And he set about it just as Christ our Lord would have done.

First of all he made friends with everyone. The sick were his first care: scurvy had broken out. Then he talked cheerfully with the sailors about their voyages, with the soldiers of their campaigns, with the merchants about their business; he was among them when they played at cards and dicing (as he found his presence stopped the violent quarrels), and even discussed the gains and losses of the players, or held the cards of a man called away. And when the Governor and his gentlemen called him to join in their conversation, he was ready to enter with interest into their political and religious discussions. And so all alike came to love this priest in his old patched cassock, with his Christ-like smile, and keen interest in everyone and everything. This meant that they crowded round him on Sundays when he stood by the mainmast and preached. And they went to confession to him. Also they checked the swearing he so disliked to hear, and the gambling that was such an

occasion of sin; and instead of quarrelling, they brought their disputes to "the holy Father" (as they called him) to settle, with his sound judgment and understanding sympathy. And the Governor and his gentlemen, watching him day after day, decided that "his desires were different from those of the world, and tended to please God only".

St. Francis said of that voyage that he could never, of *himself,* have faced the labours and hardships for a single day, and he thanked God who had given him the strength. At the end of five months they touched at an unhealthy place on the coast of Africa and Francis fell sick of fever. After thirteen months' sailing they at last reached the journey's end.

The Apostle of the Indies and Friend of the Children.

The first place where Francis got to work was Goa, a beautiful city on an island, and the harbour where Portuguese ships lay for several months of the year. Beautiful as was the city, it was full of every sort of vice, cruelty, injustice, and irreligion. The Portuguese colonists were bad beyond description, and between their example and the Mohammedan persecutions, the native Christians stood no chance; and as for the Hindoos, they were too disgusted and horrified at the lives of the white men even to dream of accepting their religion. The Bishop of Goa, a good man, who became a devoted friend of Francis, was unhappy and helpless in the face of his overwhelming task, and the churches remained mostly shut all the year round, no one hearing Mass or using the Sacraments. But St. Francis, undaunted and full of confidence, tackled the enormous task, and succeeded. This is how he set to work. He got hold of a handbell, and went up and down the streets and bazaars clanging it and shouting, "Faithful Christian friends of Jesus Christ, for the love of God, send your boys and girls and your slaves to hear the Catechism of the Christian doctrine". When a crowd had collected he would preach to them; and then, followed by an eager rabble of children—often as many

as 300—go into the Church of our Lady of the Rosary, and teach them their prayers and the Commandments. He composed a simple little Catechism that they could easily learn, and having set it to music he taught the children to sing it! This pleased them, and they and the slaves would go about singing the Christian truths to the airs St. Francis taught them. And they not only sang their beliefs, but lived them: the children became good Catholics, and even had the courage to speak up boldly when their elders did cruel and unjust things that they knew were sinful. Gradually many other churches were opened for teaching the children, and wherever Francis appeared with his bell whole families, including the men and women, ran to hear, both Portuguese and natives. In half a year he had reformed the city, the people had given up their evil and unjust ways, the empty churches were being regularly attended. As to the infidels, there were so many native converts that there were not enough priests to hear the confessions during Lent.

The Pearl Fisheries.

Having reformed the city of Goa and started a Jesuit College there, St. Francis was at last free to think of the Indians for whom he had really taken that long voyage. So, taking with him two young priests who understood the Malabar language (which he could only speak a little), he travelled 600 miles southward to the pearl fisheries, where he began to teach the ignorant and low-caste pariahs. At first they would not listen to him, but by doing a miracle on a sick woman he won their trust. God gave him wonderful healing power, and he used it to win thousands for Christ. The poor people flocked about him as he preached and instructed them, and (as he wrote back to his friends at Rome) his arm became so tired with administering baptism that he could hardly move it. During this time he is said to have raised four dead people to life.

As to the way he lived during this time of ceaseless work, it was in a poor little fisher's cabin, the ground his

bed, his food the same as that of the poorest people—rice and water. He only slept three hours at night, and spent the rest in prayer. And God gave him such spiritual joy that he noticed nothing of his hardships.

After fifteen months he returned to Goa; but the next year found him again at the pearl fisheries, where he had more and more success, and several dangerous adventures.

"All Things to All Men"—Japan.

To many places St. Francis travelled, always with the same extraordinary success, and always beloved by everyone. He reformed Malacca, another very wicked port, and stayed a long time in the Molucca Islands, converting the natives. On his going back to Goa he was nearly shipwrecked, a frightful storm lasting three days, the crew giving themselves up for lost. But after kneeling in quiet prayer before his crucifix for some hours, St. Francis stilled the storm and the ship finished the voyage peacefully.

He had made friends with a Japanese, and baptised him; and now, rejoicing at the thought of a fresh field for his harvesting, he sailed to Japan, and preached in many places, baptising enormous numbers.

Some Stories.

St. Francis always went very poorly clad, an old pair of shoes on his feet, and, far from having a servant for himself, always ready to do the lowliest services for everyone. But once he behaved in quite a different way. He arrived at a certain town, where he felt sure that if he won the King he would be able to baptise many souls. And we read: "Perceiving that he was rejected at Court upon the account of his mean appearance, he bought a rich suit, and hired two or three servants; and in this equipage waited on the King, to whom he made a present of a little striking-clock and some other things. Thus he obtained his protection and preached with such fruit

that he baptised three thousand persons in that city with whom he left two Jesuits who were his companions, to give the finishing touch to their instruction."

But St. Francis Xavier's usual way of going about had become almost a joke with his friends at Goa. The only way in which they could get him to put on a new cassock was to steal into his room while he slept, take away his old, dusty, tattered one, and put a new one in its place. This as likely as not he would put on without noticing the change, for when he was alone his mind was always rapt in God, or in the thought of his beloved Indians. Once, when he had come out in one of these new cassocks a rich friend (who was in the secret) complimented him, for fun, on his smart appearance. St. Francis, suddenly noticing what he had on, was as covered with confusion as if he had stolen it, to the amusement of his friends. His thoughts often and often turned with longing to his Order and his comrades, and especially to his beloved Father Ignatius. One of his greatest trials was that he could hardly ever hear from them. He wrote them many, many long letters, giving every detail of his work, which is why we know about it so fully. When he was writing to St. Ignatius he would kneel while he wrote.

As he had done during his journeys in Europe, so now he always made the public hospital his lodging, and spent his spare time and half his nights serving the sick, choosing always those with the most loathsome diseases and sores, and doing all the most humble services for them, making their beds, washing them, and, of course, bringing them endless comfort by his joyful, serene presence and sweet smile. Whenever he could, he lived on begged food, and went barefoot.

Death of St. Francis.

St. Francis's life in the Indies seemed to be all success, but the last act was to be a disappointment. He longed to go to China; and the more he heard how impossible it was, the more eager he was to get there. No strangers were allowed to land, and it would have meant torture,

imprisonment, and probably death if he had done so; but, scorning all fear of such things, he had made a plan by which he could secretly have landed with an interpreter. But just when all was ready his helpers failed him and the ships sailed without him. It was then, at a little island near China, and far from his friends, that he fell desperately ill. He was in constant agony, sickness preventing him taking any food, at one time a frightful headache keeping him even from being able to pray. And he lay suffering in a little open hut on the seashore, exposed to the bitter north wind. The clumsy doctor's attentions only made him worse. But through all he was calm, patient, joyful. And so, at last, his eyes fixed on his crucifix, with the words, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped," on his lips, he died.

As a useful appendix to the life of St. Francis Xavier the following notes on China are added here:

CHINA: THE CHURCH'S BIGGEST TASK

Four hundred million people—more than a quarter of the whole population of the world—live in China, which was a great civilised empire 2,000 years before our Lord's time—before Abraham, or the making of Stonehenge. Until recently it was always so isolated from the West that the Church could do little to preach Christ to the crowded millions in China. A stone inscription has been found which seems to show that a Christian missionary came to China as early as 635, and was welcomed and encouraged by the Emperor; probably this was a Nestorian mission, for later on the Nestorians certainly had flourishing churches in China. The first Catholic missionaries were sent by the Franciscans and Dominicans in the thirteenth century. The first real mission established was at Pekin, and was started by a Franciscan friar sent by Pope Nicholas IV. During the next 100

years more and more friars went out, the first party being several Bishops sent to consecrate the founder of the mission as Archbishop. But, sad to say, all the splendid work established in that 100 years was wrecked in the disturbance which followed the fall of the Mongols (1368).

The next great effort to convert China was made in the seventeenth century, and begun by the Jesuits, though the Dominicans and Franciscans soon flocked over again to this their old field. By 1692 the Jesuits were in high favour at the Chinese Court. But fifty years later a terrible persecution had broken out. It was during this time that the five Dominicans who were beatified in 1893 suffered martyrdom—among them the Vicar-Apostolic, Blessed Peter Sanz. The following story of his martyrdom is the story of how really and truly the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the Church:

The five brave Dominicans had been seized and cast into prison, and many times questioned and brutally tortured, when at last news was secretly brought to the prison that Fr. Sanz was condemned to death. With joy he prepared to die, and was at last led out to the place of execution, where a large stone had been placed in the middle of the road. To the last the brave old Bishop (he was nearly seventy) fulfilled the duty of his vocation and preached for the salvation of souls; his very last words were a little sermon, for, having prayed, he signed to the executioner to do his duty, saying, "My friend, I am going to Heaven!" "Ah, how I wish I were going with you," replied the man. "Well," said the old preacher with his last breath, "if you want to save your soul you must obey the law of God". And with that his head was struck off.

The native priest, Fr. Matthias, who had attended him to the last, tried to spread a cloth on the stone, so as to receive the martyr's blood, to be kept as a relic. But he was not allowed to. A Chinese pagan, however, scattered some ashes all about, and when they were soaked in the blood, he collected them and gave them

to Fr. Matthias. When this man (Chin-hu-yuen) returned to his home he would not wash the holy blood from his hands, but laying them on the heads of his children he said, "Ah, my sons, may the blood of Pe bring you life and salvation". The following night he felt drawn, he knew not why, to go to the place of execution. He went, and reverently collected the drops of blood still flowing from the martyr's body.

When morning dawned he went to the spot again, and this time he took up the stone on which the Bishop had knelt, and had it carried back to his house, where he set it up in a place of honour, engraving on it in Chinese letters: "From this stone the Venerable Master Pe ascended to Heaven". This devotion shown by the pagan Chinese man to the Christian martyr won him a great reward. The gift of Faith came to him and his family, and they were all baptised.

(Persecutions continued more or less down to 1860. Since then also there have been anti-Christian outbreaks, especially when the European Governments were treating China unjustly and seizing her territories. During the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, no less than thirty-six Bishops were martyred. But the Church is now making great progress and Catholics number two millions. There are several well-known ways in which we can help our Lord to win this vast Empire, especially by helping the organisation which fosters the supply of native priests.)

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